

# **THE CRITERIA OF JUDGEMENT IN THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW**

Joseph L. Leckie

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of MPhil  
at the  
University of St Andrews



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by

Joseph L. Leckie

This thesis is submitted for the degree of M.Phil. at  
The University of St. Andrews.

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Abstract of the thesis "The Criteria of Judgement in Matthew"  
by Joseph L. Leckie.

An introduction gives weight to the contention that the topic has been neglected.

Chap. 1 fixes the date of writing between A.D. 90 - 100. Provenance in Tyre or Sidon seems likely. No firm conclusion is reached regarding authorship, but the two-editor hypothesis is favoured as is the idea of a School of Matthew. Some points of similarity are found between Matthew and other writings of about his period. It is considered a strong possibility that Matthew carried on a polemic against the Jewish community at Jamnia.

Chap. 2 deals with the criteria of judgement emerging from the Sermon on the Mount: savourless salt, an absence of the inner resources which produce good works; lack of the righteousness which exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees; anger and abusive and condemnatory speech; adultery in the heart; divorce; lack of forgiveness to a brother; the parsimonious eye with the possibility of duplicity; censoriousness; the wide gate and the broad way, a likely meaning of which is lack of repentance; false disciples and false prophets whose verbal affirmations and even wonderful works are not matched by their conduct; disobedience to Jesus' teaching.

In Chap. 3 attention is directed to disbelief in and rejection of Jesus and his mighty works which culminate in the unforgivable sin. This is closely associated with and virtually equivalent to rejecting his disciples (this matter recurs in chap. 4). Autonomous religion is condemned (15.13, 14; 23 passim).

Rejection of the King's invitation also figures and the meaning of the wedding garment in 22.11-14 is considered. Hypocrisy and its

Abstract cont.

ramifications are dealt with. Want of vigilance, some of it a sort of bland unawareness, some of it resulting in ungodly, profligate, cruel and tyrannous behaviour also appears.

Lack of watchfulness reappears in chap. 4 with emphasis on sham religion. Considerable space is given to the meaning, if any, of the oil (25.1-13). Next comes failure to use one's spiritual gift and finally, lack of charity in the most elementary form to those who are, it is held, Jesus' lowliest disciples.

A conclusion attempts to show that wrong attitude is all-embracing and that rejection of Jesus and/or his disciples is the next most significant criterion of judgement with lack of repentance ranking almost equally.

Twelve appendices attempt to give background to some material which was only adumbrated in the text or treated less fully than it deserved owing to limitations of space.

Declaration by Applicant

I hereby declare that this thesis has been composed by myself, that the work of which it is a record has been done by me, and that it has not been accepted in any previous application for a Higher Degree.

Certificate of Supervisor

I certify that Joseph L. Leckie has spent the statutory period in Higher Study and Research, has fulfilled the Ordinance and Regulations for the Degree of M. Phil. of the University of St. Andrews, and is therefore qualified to submit this thesis in application for the Degree.

Supervisor.

Academic Record of Applicant

I first matriculated in the University of Oxford in October 1948, and in 1951 graduated B.A. (M.A., 1960) with Honours in Philosophy, Politics and Economics.

Having been admitted as a Research Student at the University of St. Andrews in January 1975 I prosecuted part-time research for at least six terms in the Department of Theology under the Rev. Dr. G.A. Weir and the Rev. Prof. R.McL. Wilson, F.B.A.

PREFACE

The prevalence of figured headings may be seen as coldly clinical or mechanical, but this is due to the fact that some of the original verbal headings seemed to be open to the criticism of question-begging. I therefore decided to adopt, initially, an almost entirely seriatim treatment, intending to re-shuffle the sections in the final draft. But the end of my time came before the end of my cogitations.

Now that I have begun, as it were, to see the whole forest rather than devote my vision myopically to straightening out the twigs, it might have been good to have adopted another lay-out, at once more captivating and more edifying. I could, for instance, have taken the concept of wrong attitude, which is all-embracing, and applied it to everything relevant, so arriving at some such scheme as follows:

Chap. 1. Wrong Attitude Expressed in Lack of Repentance - tying together 11.20-24; 12.41, 42 with perhaps 7.13, 14; 22.11-14 etc.

Chap. 2. Wrong Attitude Disclosed in Rejection of Jesus and his Disciples - connecting 10.13, 14; 11.20-24; 23.29-35; 25.31-46 and so forth.

Chap. 3. Wrong Attitude Disclosed in Lack of Good Works - arising in (5.13b?); 5.20; 6.22, 23; (7.13, 14?); 7.15-23; 23, passim; 25, passim.

Chap. 4. Wrong Attitude Revealed in Lack of Compassion - 12, passim; 23.4, 13, 23, 31; 25.31-46 etc. Or, the words "wrong attitude" could be omitted from the headings and the idea stressed in each case within the text. In this case, the same hurdles would have to be surmounted.

Anyone who tried this would find either that some chapters would be very much shorter than others or that a good deal of miscellaneous material, e.g. anger (5.22) etc., would have to be put in a chapter by

itself. He would also be faced with the technical difficulty of the diverse possible interpretations of each individual passage within his chapter headings, which would involve a great many cross-references. Even in the samples given above there is a number of passages which appear more than once. In a full account of such a scheme, overlapping would be very frequent.

At least one benefit accrues from the serialim presentation, namely that 25.31-46, which, in its climactic position, connects lack of compassion, want of good works and, arguably, rejection of Jesus' disciples, remains at the end. Under any arrangement it might have been placed there, but not without inconsistency, as other passages would have been out of the sequence in which Matthew sets them.

Matthew possibly intended a further climax in relation to judgement. Taking disbelief as a given criterion of judgement (8.11, 12), Matthew may have intended us to see the disbelief of the guards, chief priests and elders, and, consequently, the people after the Resurrection (28.11-15) as the sort of grand finale of judgement. (This theme is specially related to Jews (8.10, "not even in Israel have I found such faith", par. Lk. 7.9)). Even the disciples are not exempt from doubt (28.17b). Jewish disbelief in and rejection of Jesus is connected with the guilt of the Crucifixion (27.25, ".... His blood be upon us and on our children"). Judgement is probably associated with the cry of dereliction (see Appendix L). This matter has only been adumbrated, because 28.11-15 is not explicitly about final judgement.

With some misgiving I have let the format stand. Perhaps it discloses lack of imagination in failing to grasp the form and sequence which

Matthew would have adopted had he been writing solely of final judgement. But I have inhibitions about tampering with the sequence as we find it, out of respect - perhaps the wrong kind of respect - for Matthew. May I hope that someone more able than I and with fewer distractions (many of them trivial but niggling nevertheless) will feel impelled to write a better thesis on the same awesome subject. Scholars (and the public) need to attend to it and someone ought to sound the trumpet of warning (cf. Is. 58.1; Ezek. 33.3, 6, etc.) "...whether they (the Jew-in-the-street/man-in-the-street, the study or the pew) hear or refuse to hear" (Ezek. 3.11).

J.L.L.

St. Luke's Manse,  
Lochee,  
Dundee.

Dec. '79.



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My principal thanks must go to Prof. R.Mc L. Wilson whose kindness appears to me to match his remarkable scholarship and whose unwearying diligence is an inspiration. I am also deeply indebted to Prof. Matthew Black for his personal concern and encouragement. It is amazing that a scholar of his or of Prof. Wilson's calibre should take an interest in the relatively puny efforts of a parish minister. It was at Prof. Black's suggestion that I undertook the study. This was strange in that during his Professorship at New College I had abandoned the B.D. in the final year owing to the sad and sudden death of Prof. O. Rankin who should have been my tutor. Some of Prof. Black's interest has been acknowledged in the text. I am also grateful to Dr. G.A. Weir for his great amiability, his Greek scholarship and several suggestions on detail. Profs. William McKane and A.C. Cheyne have, on occasions, kindly assisted me with references, as have Drs. A.J.M. Wedderburn and J.S. Alexander. These have saved me some extra journeys to St. Andrews and allowed the typing on the sections in question to go ahead. I also offer hearty thanks to Prof. E. Best who first made me realize the sort of study that is required.

The typing of Miss B.H. Brown, a member of my church, who did the first draft out of the goodness of her heart is much appreciated. Of the many typists I employed at various times, I can only thank with sincerity Mrs. O. Lavery, Mrs. A.T. Stewart, Mrs. M. Miller, Mrs. J. Young and Miss M. Smith. To the last three I owe a special debt of thanks for they were willing and able to give my work their undivided attention. Besides, they took the initiative in correcting most of their own errors, a service which is rare in this area.

My dear wife has tholed a good deal of inconvenience and helped to type in her scarce spare time. She has my warmest gratitude.

I have greatly benefited from the sheer efficiency, vitality and kindness of Miss M.Blackwood, St.Mary's College Secretary, and her assistants.

The staff of St.Andrew's University Library and of New College Library have been extremely courteous and helpful. Among the former, the indefatigable zeal, meticulous care and vast knowledge of Misses M.Fowler, E.Robertson and J.Young have been freely laid at my disposal. Though Dundee University Library has few theological books, Miss C.J.Beck, Miss M.M.Weatherstone and other members of the staff have been extraordinarily kind at times when I was unable to get to St.Andrews.

I am most thankful to the Almighty who has not permitted the iron of judgement to displace my own trust in His mercy gratuitously offered (18.27, 32; 26.28) and despite much brooding on those on the "left hand" has not permitted me to forget to rejoice over those on the "right hand" (25.31-46).

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAGA or Aramaic Approach ...	<u>Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts</u> (M. Black).
Ab.	<u>Pirke Aboth.</u>
Ah.	"The Story of Ahikar".
Ant.	"Antiquities of the Jews" (Josephus).
Ar.	'Arakhin.
Aramaic Approach ...	<u>Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts</u> (M. Black).
A.V.	Authorised or King James' Version.
b.	<u>Babylonian Talmud.</u>
Bah.	Bahodesh.
BB	Baba Bathra.
Bem. R.	Bemidar Rabba.
Ber.	Berakoth.
Bes.	Beshallah.
Billerbeck	Strack-Billerbeck, <u>Kommentar</u> ... see Bibliography:
BJRL	<u>Bulletin of the John Ryland's Library.</u>
BK	Baba Kamma.
BM	Baba Metzia.
Clem.	Clement.
Con. Celsum	Contra Celsum.
CR	Community Rule.
Danby	<u>The Mishnah</u> (H. Danby).
DB	<u>Dictionary of the Bible</u> (ed. James Hastings).
DCG	<u>Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels</u> ed. James Hastings
De Compunct.	De Compunctione Cordis (Chrysostom).

den.	denarius.
Dionys. Areop.	Dionysius, "the Areopagite".
DR	Damascus Rule.
DSS	Dead Sea Scrolls.
Eccl.	Ecclesia.
Ennar.	Ennarationes in Psalmos (Augustine).
Freedman	Midrash Rabbah.
Gitt.	Gittin.
Hennecke	<u>The New Testament Apocrypha.</u>
Immortalité de l'Ame ...	<u>Immortalité de l'Ame ou Résurrection des Morts.</u> (Cullmann).
JBL	<u>Journal of Biblical Literature.</u>
J.B.P.	J. B. Phillips' Translation.
Jub.	The Book of Jubilees.
Judaism	<u>Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era.</u> (Moore).
Kas.	Kaspa.
Ket.	Ketuboth.
Kid.	Kiddushin.
Lact. Inst.	<u>Lactantius' Institutes.</u>
Meil.	Meilah.
Men.	Menahoth.
M.T.	Massoretic Text.
Ned.	Nedarim.
Nez.	Nezikin.
NTA	New Testament Abstracts.
NTS	<u>New Testament Studies.</u>
Pes.	Pesahim.
Pes. Rab.	<u>Pesikta Rabbati.</u>
Pis.	Pisha.
PJ	<u>Parables of Jesus</u> (J. Jeremias).
Rashi.	<u>Commentary of R. Isaac Yizhaki</u> (d. 1105).
RHPR	<u>Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses.</u>

R.S.V.	Revised Standard Version.
Sanh.	Sanhedrin.
Sayings	<u>The Sayings of Jesus</u> (T. W. Manson).
S.B.T.	<u>Studies in Biblical Theology</u> .
ses.	Sesterce(s).
Shab.	Shabbatha.
Shir.	Shirata.
SM	Sermon on the Mount (used by W. D. Davies).
Sot.	Soṭah.
S.P.C.K.	Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge.
SSM	The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount. (W. D. Davies).
Strack or Strack-Billerbeck	Strack-Billerbeck, <u>Kommentar</u> ... (see Bibliography)
Ta'an	Ta'anith.
TDNT	<u>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</u> (Kittel: Bromiley).
Textual Commentary ...	<u>Textual Commentary on the New Testament</u> (Metzger).
TIM	<u>Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew</u> . (Bornkamm, Barth and Held).
Tos. Ber.	Tosafoth Berakoth.
Tr.	Tractate.
WWJ	<u>The Work and Words of Jesus</u> (A. M. Hunter).
Yeb.	Yebamoth.
Zut.	Zuṭarta.

# THE CRITERIA OF JUDGEMENT IN MATTHEW

## Introduction

The subject deserves consideration because the manifest importance attached to it by Matthew (and indeed by other N.T. writers, but see p.6ff.) is not reflected in modern theological works. I use the word manifest in view of the amount of space Matthew devotes to it and in view of the severity of the threats he utters against certain types of attitude and conduct of which he disapproves.<sup>1</sup> This submission on the lower proportion of space devoted to the general theme of judgement in theology and in preaching was made by Theo Preiss almost a quarter of a century ago but it still holds good. He lamented:

"Final judgement figures so little in the theology and preaching of the church. For many years, for example, Karl Barth has ceased to speak of it. Cullmann hardly mentions it. Niebuhr like Barth of thirty years ago seems only to see present judgement."<sup>2</sup>

By present judgement we shall understand events such as wars (Mt. 24.6) or human assessment of one's fellow men such as: "let him be to you as a Gentile or a tax collector" (18.17). By final judgement we shall understand judgement that takes place at the end of time or at the parousia, e.g. 25.31, or judgement associated with the punishment of hell, e.g. 5.29,30, or if not specifically of hell, punishment which appears to be eternal and against which there is no evident appeal, e.g. 22.13; 24.51; 25.13,41,46.

Moberly has well said:

"A certain fierceness against wrong and wrongdoers is involved in a real ardour for goodness: it is necessary for moral health, and, if we have lost it, we need to recover it ... The mere amiability of "le bon Dieu" of much modern opinion is but one step removed from the moral indifference of Omar Khayyam's

1 And, conversely, the rewards he promises for attitudes and conduct of which he approves, but judgement will be dealt with here in its adverse sense.

2 Life in Christ, London, 1954, p.70.



"Good Fellow". The use of "anger" or "wrath" in connection with God is only objectionable, in so far as it suggests an arbitrary, private and personal emotion."<sup>1</sup>

Reumann has recently confirmed the view of Preiss:

"... the note of judgement was far more frequent in what Jesus said than it is in sermons today. Modern man ... does not like to hear about a divine judgement of the living and the dead."<sup>2</sup>

It is difficult to deny that Berdyaev's statement of forty years ago is still valid:

"It is remarkable how little people think about hell or trouble about it. This is the most striking evidence of human frivolity."<sup>3</sup>

Those who avoid or evade writing or speaking of judgement are quick to accuse any who do of depicting God as vindictive and loveless, quite other than the Father who sends sun and rain indiscriminately on evil and good, just and unjust (5.45). Berdyaev has an answer to this on the next page:

"The idea of hell is cosmologically connected with freedom and personality and not with justice and retribution. Paradoxical as it sounds, hell is the moral postulate of man's spiritual freedom. Hell is necessary not to ensure the triumph of justice and retribution to the wicked, but to save man from being forced to be good and compulsorily installed in heaven."

If we accept the basic soundness of C. S. Lewis' hypothesis in The Great Divorce<sup>4</sup> those who are in hell would, if given the chance, be even less happy in heaven and in the phantasy did decide almost unanimously to return to hell. Matthew indicates that man has the ability to make choices of eternal consequence. These choices seem to be quite irrevocable (see 12.32, 25.10b, "the door was shut", and 25.12). Evidently man has been invested with the dignity of being able to make such choices. A. M. Hunter writes that Jesus used "the idea of doomsday to persuade men that eternal issues hung upon their response to the Reign of God decisively manifested in his person and mission."<sup>5</sup>

1 W. H. Moberly, "The Atonement", in B. H. Streeter, Foundations, London, 1912, p.279.

2 John Reumann, Jesus in the Church's Gospels, London, 1970, p.241.

3 Nicolas Berdyaev, The Destiny of Man, London, 1937, p. 338.

4 London, 1945, p. 34ff.

5 The Work and Words of Jesus, London, 1950, p.106.

It seems that theologians are in the main content to leave unpleasant warnings to be sounded by secular thinkers such as Neville Shute or Arthur Miller. Occasionally a scientist will venture to give his version of impending doom. Ecologists are the type who most commonly do this but few of the public pay any heed.

Bertrand Russell issued many warnings about the evils of war, population explosion, inhibitions, the loss of happiness owing to sexual inhibitions, etc. In these matters he was to some extent another prophet who foresaw secular judgement if men did not amend their ways.

In regard to final judgement he rightly observed an inconsistency in Christianity and seemed to reckon he had caught it in a pincer movement. First he objected to the recorded teaching of Jesus:

"There is one very serious defect to my mind in Christ's moral character, and that is that he believed in hell. I do not myself feel that any person who is really profoundly humane can believe in everlasting punishment. Christ certainly as depicted in the Gospels did believe in everlasting punishment, and one does find a vindictive fury against those people who would not listen to his preaching ... which does somewhat detract from superlative excellence." <sup>1</sup>

Then with the other blade of his pincers he assaulted Christians for departing from the doctrine of their master:

"... what modern apologists call 'true' Christianity depends upon a very selective process. It ignores much that is to be found in the Gospels: for example the parable of the sheep and the goats and the doctrine that the wicked will suffer eternal torment in Hell fire ..." <sup>2</sup>

In the chapter "Can Religion Cure our Troubles?" <sup>3</sup> Russell omitted to mention any of the great social reforms of the 19th century inaugurated by pronounced Christians such as Lord Shaftesbury, William Wilberforce, Elizabeth Fry or John Howard. He must therefore be accused of prejudice

1 Bertrand Russell, Why I am not a Christian, Second Edition, London, 1967, p.22.

2 Loc.cit., p.166. Note that in this quotation he has promoted 'hell' by spelling it with a capital 'H'.

3 Loc.cit., p.160ff.

as he loads his case with examples of Christian war-mongers and persecutors without any acknowledgement that many Christians have been peacemakers and have denounced all forms of persecution.

In view of this, neither jab of his two-pronged attack on judgement (or indeed any of his fulminations against Christianity) can be taken as objective or balanced, but at least he did see the discrepancy between Master and disciples. To his discredit, Russell failed to notice that the strongest plea for deeds of love (of which he approved) in the 'parable' of the sheep and the goats is closely associated with final rewards and punishments (in which he did not believe). He was more eclectic, in this respect, than the Christian teachers whom he castigated.

Berdyaev dismissed somewhat airily the motive of "the triumph of justice and retribution to the wicked." As will become manifest, Matthew would not agree with such a dismissal. To discuss whether the nature of final punishment is retributive or not is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, Matthew softens the concept of "the triumph of justice". Judgement is "according to works" (16.27) and therefore according to justice, yet justice is never separated from mercy. In 23.23 they are closely linked. While in 20.1-16 mercy is exalted over justice, in 18.32ff. justice has the last word because mercy has been rejected (cf. 6.14,15). It is significant that the idea of judgement by works is, paradoxically, associated with God's love in what may well be alluded to in 16.27, namely in Psalm 62.12:

"... to thee O Lord belongs steadfast love  
For thou dost requite a man  
According to his works." (cf. Pirke Aboth 3.22b).

To allow history to roll on without a final judgement would not be a sign of love but of abdication on the part of God. James Denney wrote:

"It is not ethical to suppose that the condition of the world is that of endless suspense in which the good and evil permanently balance each other, and contest with each other the right to inherit the earth."<sup>1</sup>

There is no doubt that Matthew would have endorsed this view and that of Pierre Maury:

"The human adventure indefinitely prolonged has no goal and therefore no sense."<sup>2</sup>

The end which the church ought to preach, continues Maury, is "not a date like any other ... It is a verdict pronounced by the ever-transcendent Creator of the Universe."

Paul Tillich's solution of the problem tackled by Berdyaev is:

"The ontological character of love solves the problem of the relation between love and justice. Judgement is an act of love which surrenders that which resists it to self destruction."<sup>3</sup>

This seems to accord well with a possible interpretation of *κόλασις* in 25.46 namely that of pruning to the point of extinction of personality. Taken with the phrase "prepared for the devil and his angels" (v. 41b.) it might well imply that the cursed have been pruned of their humanity by obstinate lack of compassion or, to put it in another way, their own unloving choices have endwarped their humanity to vanishing point.

Love is not compatible with coercion. The temptation narrative makes this plain (4.1-11). The judgement on the refusal to accept love then must be the elimination of the unloving and this is just what we find in 25.31-46.

I hope that the title "criteria" will not seem to beg the question of whether there might be only one criterion. It might be inferred that

1 Studies in Theology, London, 1895, p.240.

2 Pierre Maury, The Church's Witness to God's Design, London, 1948, pp.102-3 (Vol. 2 of Man's Disorder and God's Design: an Ecumenical Study prepared under the Auspices of the World Council of Churches, 5 Vols.).

3 Systematic Theology, London, 1973, Vol. 1, p.314.

the situation ethicists would admit to only one criterion of judgement as there is, in their view, only one criterion of moral behaviour. To tell men to love is clearly not enough for Matthew. The love commands (22.37-39) and the Golden Rule (7.12) do include warnings against anger, adultery, self-righteousness, a censorious spirit, etc., but this is because Matthew has spelt out these warnings. If the love command sums up the whole O.T. law (22.40), Matthew evidently feels it necessary to be specific about the contents of the law reinterpreted by Jesus.

The question I propose to bring to the text of Matthew is simply what are his criteria of final judgement. I do not consider it necessary to analyse Matthew's sources. It is not part of my purpose to determine what is the authentic teaching of Jesus, except in cases, e.g. 7.22f. cf. Lk. 13.26f., where Matthew has probably redacted a more original saying to bring out his peculiar emphasis or to make it relevant to his special circumstances. My primary concern is with Jesus' teaching as Matthew presents it.

I am concerned with the explicit references to final judgement. Where there are parallels in Mark and Luke these will be considered.

One more word on the importance of judgement to Matthew. One might suppose that he could have engaged in purely positive thinking as he did in the case of the beatitudes (5.3-11). He has no parallel to the Lucan woes (Lk. 6.24-26). But, not content with the narrow gate and the narrow way he mentions the wide gate and the broad way, not content with a wise builder, wise bridesmaids, servants who use their talents and sheep who are kind, he also writes of a foolish builder, foolish bridesmaids, the man with one talent, who hid his talent, and the goats, who failed to be kind. Evidently he does not consider that promises alone are sufficient to set men's feet on the narrow way. Warnings of judgement to come are also needed. He is quite uncompromising. There is no third way, no third category.

Manson writes of "the burden of John the Baptist's teaching" on "impending judgement and the sharp division between the righteous and the wicked", and continues:

"This feature reappears with great force in many of the parables peculiar to M (Mt. 13.24-30, 47-50; 22.11-14; 25.1-13, 31-46). Characteristic teaching of the Baptist is put into the mouth of Jesus; and that this is no accident is shown by the fact that John's phrase 'offspring of vipers' (Mt. 3.7 = Lk. 3.7, Q) reappears in the mouth of Jesus in Mt. 12.34; 23.33(M) and nowhere else in the New Testament. These facts are the more impressive if, as I think very probable, the M parable of the Wheat and Tares (13.24-30) is an adaptation of Mk.'s parable of the Seed growing secretly (Mk. 4.26-29) and if the parable of the Dragnet is an expansion of a genuine saying of Jesus preserved in Mt. 13.47 ..."<sup>1</sup>

Manson's statement needs to be modified slightly in that Mt. 25.1-13 has partial parallels in Lk. 12.35-38 and Lk. 13.23-27, the latter of which does indicate final judgement, owing to the question with which it begins: "Lord, will those who are saved be few?" But Luke does not bring out the contrast of the narrow door with a wide door as he does not mention a wide door at all. Nor, apart from the introductory question, does he make explicit the final destination of the narrow door. Of his narrow gate Matthew says that it "leads to life", and of his wide gate, that it "leads to destruction" (7.13,14).

Manson has selected some instances to indicate that, within the framework of material common to all three synoptics, Matthew goes out of his way to make the theme of judgement prominent by inserting sayings that are wanting in Mark and Luke. Examples which will be dealt with, not noted by Manson above, are: 12.36,37 and 16.27.

1 T. W. Manson, The Sayings of Jesus, London, 1957, p.25. (Hereafter abbreviated to Sayings). (Evidence for the adaptation that he claims Matthew made in 13.24-30 is given by Manson on page 192 and for what he says about 13.47-50 on page 196. Both sets of evidence seem cogent to me.)

References to "M" and "Q" will be based on the same work, p.15ff.

A little may be said here of another example which will not be considered later. Though it concerns judgement it does not yield a criterion of judgement except inasmuch as devils are to be condemned just because they are devils. This is patent in the phrase "prepared for the devil and his angels" (25.41). Matthew took the ultimate condemnation of "the devil and his angels" for granted.

Matthew's regard for judgement is also revealed in a highly charged phrase he puts in the question the devils direct at Jesus in 8.29 "before the time" - "have you come to torment us before the time?"

Mark and Luke (who have only one demoniac in their parallels, Mk. 5.7; Lk. 8.28) have no mention of "before the time" but simply relate that the possessed man, not the "devils", plead "... do not torment me".

"The time" is taken by E. Schweizer to be "the Day of Judgement"<sup>1</sup> and it is hard to see that it can be anything else.

The above phrase in Mt. 8.29 is a strong, though small, testimony to Matthew's outstanding concern about judgement. Much other evidence will emerge later, pre-eminently the "parable" of the sheep and the goats (25.31-46) which is without parallel.

To urge that Matthew lays heavy stress on judgement is not to say that Luke has no interest in it as the parables of the Rich Fool (12.16-21) and of "Dives" and Lazarus (16. 19.31) testify. But the pre-eminence of Mt. 25.31-46 both because of its position at the end of the teaching material in Matthew and because of its finality in that it speaks of the coming of the Son of man in glory is, in itself, substantial testimony to Matthew's desire to highlight judgement. This will be elaborated in the chapter on Mt. 25.31-46.

Mark pays no special attention to the theme of judgement except in two texts, 4.12 and 12.40. The latter is the saying about devouring

1 The Good News according to Matthew, London, 1976, ad loc.

widows' houses which is also found in Luke (20.47). Both have the identical threat appended to those who so act: "They shall receive greater condemnation". This saying is absent from the best types of the texts of Matthew and Metzger's<sup>1</sup> reasons for omitting Mt. 23.14 are sound. Mark's reference to an offending foot in 9.45, omitted by Matthew, is not of much significance because Matthew makes the same point adequately in 5.29f.

In 4.12 Mark's rendering of the quotation of Is. 6.9,10 is more severe than Matthew's and this will be discussed when we study Matthew's parallel (13.13ff). As this is all that can be said of Mark it seems that he is relatively unconcerned about judgement or its criteria.

We may conclude that Matthew has a peculiarly strong emphasis on judgement and that this emphasis ought to be reflected in preaching and teaching from the Gospel that bears his name.

A few passages which would have been interesting to consider have been omitted from other than a cursory reference owing to the limitation of space.

1 Bruce M. Metzger, A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, London; New York, 1971, ad loc. i.e. on Mt. 23.13.



CHAPTER I. THE SETTING

SECTION 1. DATE AND PROVENANCE

The arguments advanced by Kilpatrick<sup>1</sup> concerning the date of composition of the Gospel are cogent. He contends that the liturgical background of the Gospel, its relations with Judaism and the nature of the unwritten tradition used in it, favour a date after A.D.90. Perhaps the strongest argument that lies behind these points is the date of the Birkath ha-Minim which was composed by Samuel the Small at Jamnia, c. A.D.85.<sup>2</sup> There is plentiful evidence in Matthew that there was persecution of Christians and that they were excluded from synagogues (4.23; 9.35; 10.17; 12.9; 13.54; 23.34). Five years might be a reasonable time to allow before the curse became sufficiently well-established for its results to be recorded by Matthew. Kilpatrick puts the terminus ad quem at A.D.100 for the following reasons: the complete ignorance of the Pauline Epistles and independence of their doctrine shown in the Gospel;<sup>3</sup> the reference to the poll-tax (which did not operate after A.D.100); the Gospel was known at Antioch and used by its bishop by A.D.115.

Concerning the place of origin of the Gospel, we cannot be certain. There are some indications though most of the certain ones are negative. Matthew is ignorant of Palestinian geography.<sup>4</sup> He adds nothing to Mark's naming of places despite his additional material. This argues against an origin in Palestine.

1 G. D. Kilpatrick, The Origin of St Matthew's Gospel, Oxford, 1946, chap. 1 passim and chap. VII, esp. p. 130.

2 Loc. cit., p.109.

3 Assuming that the theory of G. Zuntz, The Text of the Epistles, London, 1953, is correct, namely that the publication and collection of the Pauline corpus was dated c. 100 A.D. Besides, if Matthew knew 1 Cor. 15.1-12, Paul's summary of proof for the Resurrection, it is strange that he did not use it in chap. 28. It is the sort of apologetic that Matthew likes.

4 Kilpatrick, loc. cit., p.7.

Many scholars have held that Antioch was the place of origin. Several factors support this. "It was," in Kilpatrick's words, "a Greek foundation and Greek was the language of the city."<sup>1</sup> Matthew was written in a Greek-speaking community, evidence of which is for example his O.T. quotations which are mostly from the LXX. Antioch had, moreover, a Jewish community and Matthew besides being Greek in language was intensely Jewish, as we shall see. The Christian church at Antioch was founded early and was so important as to have Barnabas remain there.<sup>2</sup> It was in touch with both Palestine and with other centres of Christianity. Kilpatrick continues:

"It was far enough away from Palestine to account for an inexactness in knowledge of the province ... Ignatius, its bishop, was the first to show any acquaintance with the Gospel and that not long after it was written. It would also soon feel the effect of any measures taken by Judaism against Christianity. The rival of Alexandria, it always displayed an independence in thought which would account for the absence in Matthew of the similarities to Philo which we find in the Fourth Gospel. In Syria too as we know from Celsus, there were eschatological claimants in plenty and the writer of our Gospel was aware of them, calling them false Christs and false prophets.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand there are reasons for hesitating to accept the claims of Antioch. Ignatius, who may have been bishop there when Matthew was written, shows no trace of the Jewish influence which is so strong in the Gospel and ex hypothesi in the community in which it originated. Except for the pre-eminence of Peter, the indications in Matthew do not favour Antioch to the exclusion of the Syrian ports. On the other hand the story of the Canaanite woman may be evidence for the Phoenician cities against Antioch. The presence of Peter at Antioch in Gal. ii.11ff. neither gives him an outstanding position there nor excludes the possibility that he may have had connexions with Phoenicia. There may be one small piece of evidence against associating him too closely with Antioch. From Acts xi. 19-26 Antioch seems to have been the centre of the Gentile mission, but, according to Gal. ii.8, Peter was called to the ministry of the circumcision. This would bring him and our Gospel together and separate both from Antioch.

The difficulties in the way of placing Matthew at Antioch do not apply to the Phoenician cities. They were busy, wealthy seaports in Syria, largely Greek in speech and early homes of Christianity. One advantage they have over Antioch. Matthew

1 Op. cit., p.133.

2 Acts 11.28; 15.35; etc.

3 This argument is supported by B. H. Streeter who writes in The Four Gospels, London, 1911, p.241: "In N. Palestine there seems to have been much apocalyptic expectation." For further arguments in favour of Antioch, see Kilpatrick op. cit., p.134.

originated in a community in close contact with the Judaism of Jamnia. This is much more likely to be true of the Christian community in Tyre, for example, than of that at Antioch. If we must select one of the southern Phoenician cities, Tyre or Sidon would meet the requirements of Matthew as well as anywhere, but perhaps it is better to rest content with the general suggestion of Phoenicia as the place of origin."

Among possible points of contact between the Gospel and Phoenicia given by Kilpatrick,<sup>1</sup> is the use of the words *σεισμός* (four times in Matthew, once each in Mark and Luke) and *σειέειν* (3/0/0) which is possibly due to the liability of the Levant to earthquakes. Again, in the story of the Syrophoenician woman (15.21-28, par. Mk. 7.24-38), uncomplimentary to her and her people, Matthew alters her description from *Ἑλληνίς, Συροφονικίσσα τῷ γένει* to *Χαναανίτις*. Mark's phrase would relate to the Hellenizing cities of the coast, the term in Matthew to the more Semitic countryside where Canaanite was used as a synonym for Phoenician. Thus Matthew could have been trying to divert an insult from his home city to the countryside. Benedict Green<sup>2</sup> ranks this argument as most plausible. Green<sup>3</sup> claims that at this period diminutives were losing their softening effect, though strictly speaking the word (*κυνάριον*) should mean pet dogs. In any case the difference between the common word and the diminutive is not reflected in Aramaic. Green cites no supporting evidence for the claim that dogs is "a common Jewish term of abuse for Gentiles." T. W. Manson<sup>4</sup> cites only one reference,

1 Op. cit., p.132f.

2 H. Benedict Green, The Gospel according to Matthew, Oxford, 1975, p.32.

3 Loc. cit., ad loc, (p.147).

4 Sayings, p.174.

Enoch 89.42, where dogs = Philistines.<sup>1</sup> It is plainly more a N.T. phenomenon than anything, appearing also in 7.6; Philipp. 3.2; 2 Pet. 2.22; Rev. 22.15.

Schweizer points not only to Matthew's use of Canaanite instead of Syrophenician but also Tyre and Sidon rather than just Tyre as introducing "O.T. expressions used to designate the Gentiles as distinct from the people of God."<sup>2</sup> It is probable then that dogs meant Gentiles for Matthew and to judge by the use of the term κύων elsewhere in the N.T. we must conclude that he did intend κυνάρια, despite its diminutive form, as pejorative.

Kilpatrick<sup>3</sup> draws attention to the probability that Matthew was written for a city church. This he demonstrates mainly by the use of words especially the word πόλις, used twenty-six times in Matthew against eight times in Mark. At 10.23; 23.34 the disciples flee from city to city; they do not take to the hills as so many persecuted bodies in Palestine had done.

Kilpatrick<sup>4</sup> also refers to money and economic matters. Matthew reveals a society in which there was a much wider range of coinage than Mark, though he does not go so low as Mark's λεπτόν. (Mk. 12.42; par. Lk. 21.2). Mark mentions no talent but Matthew uses it fourteen or fifteen times. Mark does not refer to gold but Matthew has it four times

1 Gerald Friedlander, in The Jewish Sources of the Sermon on the Mount, London, 1911, p.219ff., strongly denies the basis of Green's statement when he attacks Montefiore's view, which is similar to Green's. Friedlander finds that Cheyne gave two wrong references to the Talmud in support of the view that dog was "a frequent term of abuse and contempt used by Jews about Gentiles". There are in fact no Talmudic and no O.T. references to dogs = Gentiles. Friedlander puts the onus for the origin of the term, in the sense of contemptible Gentile, heathen, squarely on the shoulders of Jesus. Apart from the reference given by Manson (quoted above) there is nothing to contradict Friedlander.

2 Op. cit., ad loc.

3 Op. cit., p.124f.

4 Op. cit., p.125.

(2.11; 10.9; 23.16,17). Mt. 10.9 is especially important when compared with Mk. 6.8 for Matthew has gold, silver and copper whereas Mark mentions copper money only. In Lk. 19.11-17 the servants operate with minas, but in Mt. 25.14-30, with talents. So it is likely that Matthew was writing for a community of greater wealth than those of Mark or Luke. This is confirmed by the word Πτωχοί which occurs five times in Mark but only three times in Matthew, all from Mark. In Lk. 6.20 we read μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοί but in Matthew it is a spiritual condition, not material poverty that is blessed, so to the beatitude as we know it in Luke, Matthew adds ἐν πνεύματι.

Owing to the difficulties of transport it was in the main light-weight and very valuable goods that made a city rich. Tyre was famous for its purple dye; Sidon for its glass and dyes.<sup>1</sup> Also almost any seaport was wealthy because of the trade there but Tyre in particular was on the overland trade route from India via Seleucia in Mesopotamia.<sup>2</sup> It was also on the overseas trade route to Utica and Cadiz.<sup>3</sup> Roland Ganghoffer renders Jerome on Tyre thus: "aucune ville d'Orient n'avait une activité commerciale plus intense que Tyr,"<sup>4</sup> and continues: "... ils

- 1 Frederick C. Eiselen, Sidon: A Study in Oriental History, New York, 1966, p.121f. who also refers to Tyrian dye with evidence to support statements on both cities. The Encyclopaedia Judaica, Jerusalem, 1971, p.1507, cites Pliny, 5.76 (c.45 B.C.) to the effect that glass blowing was invented in Sidon.
- 2 Lionel Casson, The Ancient Mariners, London, 1960, p.179.
- 3 Loc. cit., p.71.
- 4 L'Evolution des Institutions Municipales en Occident et en Orient au Bas Empire, Paris, 1963, p.34. Sidon was not far behind it in prosperity, Eiselen, op. cit. 118. Eiselen quotes Diodorus, (c.60-30 B.C.) Bibliotheca historica, XVI, 41 who calls attention to the wealth of Sidon, accumulated through commerce. T. Rice Holmes in The Roman Republic and the Founder of Empire, Oxford, 1923, Vol.1., p.210, quotes Strabo IX. 1.23; X. 5,7, who says that purple dyes were imported from Tyre and glass from Sidon. Edward Gibbon, The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, ed. by I. Bury, London, 1909, Vol. 4, p.242, says that Sidon manufacturers supplied the capital of Justinian (527-565). This is too late to be of much value except that trade took a much longer time to become established in ancient than in modern times.

parcourent le monde entier par l'esprit de lucre".<sup>1</sup>

By itself their wealth would not make Tyre or Sidon likely candidates for the privilege of providing the environment for Matthew's composition, but, taken with the other evidence, this factor helps to confirm Kilpatrick's view though he does not adduce this particular evidence.

It is surely significant that Matthew omits the pericope about the poor widow and her two lepta though it is found in Mark and Luke. It is specially striking in that Matthew follows Mark fairly closely in 22.41-44 par. Mk. 12.35-37 (though what immediately precedes the story of the widow, Mk. 12.38,39, is only a very partial parallel to the whole of Mt. 23 and for Mk. 12.40 Matthew has no parallel at all). In what follows, 24.1,2, Mk. 13.1,2, the parallel is again fairly close. Why then did Matthew omit this rather important story, Mk. 12.41-44, par. Lk. 21.1-4? In Luke the text is sufficiently different to suggest two separate sources and this makes it possible that the reason was that Matthew did not want to cause unnecessary offence to his wealthy readers. It was not that he shirked warning people about the dangers of serving mammon (6.24; 13.22; 16.26; 19.21ff.), but he may have felt that the favourable comparison between the poor widow's gift and those of the rich was not tactful in his circumstances. Alternatively, it could have been that widows were well provided for.<sup>2</sup> A close-knit society of seafarers

1 Ganghoffer also quotes from the *Expositio Totius Mundi* (N<sup>o</sup> 24 oeuvre supposée être celle d'un impresario d'artistes vers la fin du règne de Constance) which says of Tyre: 'nulla enim forte civitas Orientis est eius spissior in negotio' (Edit. Riese *Geographi graeci minores*, p.108). Ibid., n.30. This is of course well after the time of Matthew but such fame in trade could not be built up fast in the early centuries of our era.

2 Wallace B. Fleming states that "the poor man is provided relief in both (Israelite and Phoenician) systems", *The History of Tyre*, New York, 1966, p.147, and this might mean that the legal provision made for widows was similar to that expressed by Ex. 22.22; Deut. 14.29, etc., though we can only guess how it worked out in practice. Isaiah, for example, evidently found these commandments to be more honoured in the breach than in the observance (Is.1.17;23; 10.2; cf. Jer 7.6; 22.3; Ezek. 22.7; Zech. 7.10; Mal. 3.5).

probably had some way of caring for widows and fatherless children when the man of the house failed to return from a voyage. This might also explain the omission by Matthew of Mk. 12.40, par. Lk. 20.47, where the scribes and Pharisees are denounced for devouring widows' houses. If a widow was not a symbol of helplessness in Phoenicia as she was in Judaea then one can see the point of omitting this. If a Phoenician widow was better provided for there would be more to be gained by devouring her house, but if she was also better protected there would be less opportunity. The simplest explanation for Matthew's omission of Mk. 12.40-44 and par. is his lesser general interest in material poverty.

Another matter which could never of itself clinch an argument but which adds to the "convergence of probabilities" is that in chapter 13 there are three parables about land crops and one about fish. Where else but at a seaside or lakeside<sup>1</sup> place with some fertile land inshore would we be likely to write of the harvest of the land and sea in the same chapter?<sup>2</sup>

Matthew's doublet on adultery and divorce (5.27-35; 19.3-9) shows that he has a greater interest in this than the other synoptists. We know that a form of Baal, Melkarth, was tutelary god of the city of Tyre<sup>3</sup>, and Astarte<sup>4</sup> the goddess of Sidon. The sexual orgies connected with Baal worship are well known. Greeks and Romans sometimes called Astarte, Aphrodite, on account of the licentiousness of the worship

1 On this basis the Sea of Galilee taken with the Plain of Gennesaret is a possibility but there is no other evidence that Matthew wrote there.

2 Eiselen observes that the fertile land was a narrow strip along the coast (Sidon, p.114) but though narrow it would be enough to make the picture .

3 Fleming, op. cit., p.146.

4 Eiselen (Sidon, p.125) confirms that Astarte is the same as Aphrodite and that she seemed to be the chief deity of Sidon. Eiselen does not describe the religious practices of Sidon, but we may assume that, with Aphrodite in the van, they would be similar to those of Tyre which we have noted. (It can be seen that several spellings of Astarte are used. I simply adhere to that of the author quoted).

sacred to her.<sup>1</sup> There is no direct evidence that these orgies took place in Tyre and Sidon at the time when Matthew wrote, but, for instance, "in the fourth century of our era", wrote Rawlinson, quoting Eusebius: "there were still licentious rites carried on at Aphaca in the Lebanon." If such rites were still practised three centuries later than Matthew in the hinterland, it is reasonable to assume that they were done in the cities in Matthew's time, owing to rural conservatism.

Fleming<sup>2</sup> quotes Antoninus Martyr (570 A.D.?) who made a pilgrimage to Tyre and recorded: "The life there is very wicked, the luxury is such as cannot be described. There are public brothels." Here is an indication that the Phoenician morality did not change much over the centuries.

To support the view that Matthew wrote in Tyre or Sidon and to harmonize it with his Jewishness, it is desirable to know whether there were Jews in these cities when he wrote. The evidence, which we will consider later in the chapter, indicates that he lived in a community containing Jews and Jewish Christians.

There is some evidence that Tyre and Sidon contained Jews. The *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (see articles on Tyre and Sidon respectively) says so. In the case of Tyre: "There was a Jewish community there, but the Tyrians were bitter enemies of the Jews (Jos. Apion 1.70)."<sup>3</sup>

1 G. Rawlinson, *Phoenicia*, London, 1889, pp. 114-5.  
See also the quotation from Eusebius on the pollutions practised at Libanus (ib. p.349) and for temple prostitution (ib. p.347f.); Fleming (loc. cit., p.148) quotes Lucian. *De Dea Syria*, 6, for Byblus only about 40 miles from Sidon and 70 from Tyre.

2 Op. cit., p.79.

3 *The Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Editors-in-Chief, Cecil Roth (1956-70), Geoffrey Wigoder (1970-71), Jerusalem, 1972, Vol. 15, p.1489.



Of Sidon the following statement in the same Encyclopaedia gives the best evidence and is the nearest in date to Matthew that we have (c. 20 B.C.):

A large number of Jews resided in Sidon as is testified by the pagano-Jewish inscriptions from Sidon to *Σαβαῖθ Αδολ* and a Jewish inscription ending with hopes of the resurrection (Frey, 2. Nos. 875-7) ...

By the first century, Jews were so numerous in Sidon that the Sidonians were afraid of attacking them in 66 C.E. when the Jews of Syria were massacred in other Greek towns (Jos. Wars, II. 479).<sup>1</sup>

Josephus<sup>2</sup> also states that in the beginning of the Jewish wars with the Romans the Sidonians were very friendly towards the Jews, and would not permit any of them to be killed or imprisoned.

Josephus<sup>3</sup> further mentions that, after 42 B.C., Mark Antony had the Jewish slaves that had been sold to Tyre and Sidon by Cassius set free. This is not strong evidence for a Jewish population some 140 years later, because a liberated slave might well seek a new environment. On the other hand some at least would probably stick to the familiar scene, especially as it was prosperous.

The Diaspora is circumstantial evidence that Jews settled in the two cities. Certainly they must have gone as far as Cyprus, for Dio Cassius records that there (c.200) the Jews, "under a certain Artemion massacred 440,000 people".<sup>4</sup> We cannot be certain that the Jews who perpetrated this outrage were all citizens of Cyprus. The way in which Dio has worded it makes it look likely. If they were not from Cyprus,

1 Ibid., Vol. 14, p.1507.

2 The Works of Flavius Josephus trans. by William Whiston, London and Edinburgh, 1877, "The Wars of the Jews", II.18.5. The two reasons are not contradictory. The friendship could have been a matter of expediency.

3 "Antiquities," XIV, 12.3-6, 306ff.

4 Dio Cassius, Dio's Roman History, (in 9 Vols.) with an English translation by Ernest Cary, editor-in-chief T.E. Page (The Loeb Classical Library) Book LXVIII, Vol. VIII, p.423.

Tyre and Sidon would be among the nearest sources of recruits. If they were all from Cyprus, there must have been a great many of them to kill so many Cypriots. If there were many Jews in Cyprus it would have been strange had there been none in the ports only 150 miles away.

W. B. Fleming has noted a story from the Annals of Eutychus, Patriarch of Alexandria, which gives the population of Tyre during the time of the wars of 604-628 A.D. between the Persians and the Byzantines. (This dark tale also illustrates what may be presumed to be a long-standing hatred of Christians by Jews). The relevant part is as follows: "There were in Tyre four thousand Jews; these wrote to all the Jews who were at Jerusalem, Cyprus, Damascus, the hill country of Galilee and Tiberias, bidding them assemble themselves together on the night of the Christian passover, slay all the Christians in Tyre ..."<sup>1</sup>

Five centuries had elapsed since Matthew wrote but this story does at least give some credence to the probability that Jews and Jewish Christians lived at Tyre in his day. It is possible that as many as four thousand would have emigrated to Tyre in the interval. It is also possible that many Jews could have moved there and multiplied fast, but it is unlikely that, in those centuries, as many had been due to these causes. There was no mass movement of Jews such as the Diaspora during the period and in view of high infant mortality in the ancient world it is unlikely that four thousand would have arisen even in five centuries from a mere handful. This is especially the case in view of the following event. Pescennius Niger in 193 A.D. sent his Mauritanian troops to wreak vengeance on Tyre for her support of Septimius Severus (Sidon was not involved). Tyre was plundered and burnt after a fearful slaughter of her citizens.<sup>2</sup> This reduction in population, which would apply proportionately

1 Op. cit., p.79.

2 Herodian, III, chap. 3.3-6, quoted by Fleming, op. cit., p.73.

to Jews in the city, lends credibility to the view that if there were four thousand, four centuries later, despite this loss, there probably were some a century earlier than the slaughter of the inhabitants.

A Christian population in Phoenicia, Tyre and Sidon is attested by Acts 11.19; 21.4,7; 27.3 (c. 60 A.D.). We know that the church in Tyre was under her own bishop, Cassius, in the Paschal controversy.<sup>1</sup> From the Apostolic age to the Council of Nicaea, little is known of Christianity in Sidon, but we learn from the list of bishops present then (325 A.D.) that Theodorus<sup>2</sup> was its bishop. This evidence is not vital to the case for a Tyrian or Sidonian provenance, but it indicates that if the case is correct, Matthew would have a Christian readership and source of inspiration in his immediate surroundings. This is obviously vital to the case for a school of Matthew, to which we refer below. It is unlikely that Matthew wrote in a place where there were neither Jews nor Jewish Christians for they would give flavour to his work and provide a background for his selection of materials and editorial labours.

R. E. Osborne<sup>3</sup> has attempted to make a case for Edessa as the place where Matthew wrote on the grounds of the parallel between the material peculiar to Matthew and Zoroastrian, Mithraic, and Buddhist teachings. Matthew certainly features duality as does Luke (e.g. two masters, 6.24, par Lk. 16.13), but not to anything approaching the extent of Zoroastrianism. Matthew's devil, for instance, is defeated by the quotation of appropriate Scripture (4.7,10,11 par Lk. 4.4,8,12). In Mt. 4.11: "the devil departed"; in Lk. 4.13: "the devil departed until an opportune time", and the words "until an opportune time" (ἄχρι καιροῦ )

1 Eusebius, Church History V.25, quoted by Fleming. Ibid.

2 Eiselen, op.cit., p.79, with reference to Pitra, Spicilegium Solesmense, I, p.531.

3 "Provenance of Matthew", Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses, 3 (3.'73) pp. 220-235.

are peculiar to Luke, probably meaning that he was more keenly aware than Matthew of the continuing struggle.

If one were looking for duality in the sense of two powers in the Gospels one would find that Luke actually has more to say of Satan and his power than any, for, while Matthew shares 16.23 with Mk. 8.33 and this is missing from Luke, Luke has 10.18; 13.16; 22.3,31 peculiar to him, all of which show the power of the devil. Though they also reveal the superior power of Jesus, the continuity of the struggle is brought out more by Luke as in 4.13 simply because of these additional references. Mithraism has little in common with Matthew that Matthew does not also have more closely in common with the O.T., e.g. Mt. 27.24,25 peculiar to Matthew which have a close affinity with the O.T. usage (Gen. 4.10; Lev. 17.4; 1 Kings 2.9; Ps. 51.14, etc.). As for Buddhism most major religions teach some measure of renunciation, perhaps the most typical of Buddhist teachings. One might well claim then that these other religions are likewise tinged with Buddhist influences. When many other parallels are possible, the force of any particular parallel proposed between Buddhism and Matthew is greatly diminished.

Anyhow the date of the arrival of the Gospel in Edessa is disputed. Bauer criticises the well-known Abgar legend with the express purpose of contesting:

"... the assumption that the presence of a Christian prince and of a state church for Edessa around the year 200 is in any way assured. But also, apart from the problem of the ruler the existence of ecclesiastically organized Christianity at this time cannot be asserted with any confidence ..."<sup>1</sup>

Bauer supports his contention from the lack of evidence in Eusebius. So the case for Edessa must be dismissed.

Altogether, a provenance in Tyre or Sidon seems the most likely, though it cannot be claimed as certain.

1 Walter Bauer, Orthodoxy and Heresy in the Earliest Christian Church, edited by R. A. Kraft and C. Krodel, London, 1971, p.8f.

Additional Note on the connexion between persecution by Jews and the Date of Matthew

R. Hummel, Die Auseinandersetzung zwischen Kirche und Judentum im Matthäusevangelium, Munich, 1963, pp. 28ff., draws attention to those texts (Mt. 6.2,5; 23.6) where synagogues are referred to simply with the definite article. This, he claims means that the breach between Jesus' disciples and Jews had not yet occurred. But it seems preferable to regard this as evidence for two editors of Matthew. Moreover, in the texts cited, the synagogues are associated with hypocrisy and so their editor is anti-Jewish. However, in 23.2 respect for the authority of Jewish teaching is commanded and in 17.27 Temple dues are to be paid. These texts also seem to indicate an editor other than the one who wrote the texts quoted by Kilpatrick.

As far as the date of Matthew is concerned it seems that we ought to take a later date based on a time after the breach between Christians and Jews had occurred rather than one prior to the breach which is in any case hinted at by the more numerous texts which speak of persecution by Jews (see p.34).

## SECTION 2. AUTHORSHIP

In the Preface to his Second Edition, K. Stendahl has a valuable summary of his findings on provenance and authorship which serves as a bridge between this section and the preceding. Part of this summary is as follows:

"The Hellenistic setting of the gospel is clear from its language, its interest in ethics rather than halaka, its positive familiarity with Hellenistic christology. The Jewish setting is equally clear, from our quotations, from stylistic peculiarities, and perhaps also from the intense preoccupation with those Jews, who had not accepted Jesus as the Messiah of whom the Scriptures spoke. These two sets of data add up to a church which grew out of Hellenistic Judaism, but which had still its contact with Jewish learning in the person of at least one of its members; a church which had learned to make the transition to an increasing gentile constituency without suffering much tension or problem in that process. And now it existed in sharp contrast to the Jewish community in town. For in this church things Jewish meant Jewish and not Jewish Christian versus gentile Christian. In such a setting traditions could be preserved and elaborated in a style which in other communities had become suspect or outdated. On the basis of such traditions and in such a milieu Matthew brings his gospel to completion. That he once was a Jew cannot be doubted. That he had had Jewish training in Palestine prior to the War is probable. That he belongs to a Hellenistic community is obvious. That this community includes gentiles is sure.<sup>1</sup>

This is a comprehensive and nicely balanced statement but it is curious that he shrinks from the two-editor hypothesis though he seems to be on the brink of it. Rather he claims that Matthew was certainly a Jew and probably "had had Jewish training ...". There is evidence pointing in this direction. Some examples given by Stendahl may be given.

In Mk. 13.14 the masculine (ἐσθλός) refers the sign to a person. The parallel in Mt. 24.15 uses the neuter (ἐσθλόν) which is "more in

1. Kirster Stendahl, The School of Matthew, Second Edition, Philadelphia, 1967, p. xiii.

accordance with the Jewish interpretation."<sup>1</sup>

"The adapting of O.T. by Matthew in 2.6 renders the citation of Micah 5.1; 2 Sam. 5.2 more appropriate." Matthew had a "specific object", to point out "the fulfilment in Christ". This makes his interpretation "tendentious"<sup>2</sup>. We may compare this with an example from the Dead Sea Scrolls, in the Commentary on Ps. 37.30b, where "those who hate the Lord shall be like the pride of pastures" is altered to "those who love the Lord", for obvious reasons. So the manner of treating the O.T. text is similar.

Thirdly, Stendahl<sup>3</sup> takes one of the Qumran scrolls containing the Habbakuk commentary as evidence of the peshar type of interpretation found also in Matthew. He begins this section<sup>4</sup> by pointing out:

"Just as Mt.'s formula quotations are expressly interpreted as fulfilled by the words or deeds of Jesus, so the Habbakuk Commentary (DSH) applies the first two chapters of Habbakuk verse by verse to the Teacher of Righteousness and the events which surround him."

One of his best examples<sup>5</sup> of a peshar type of interpretation is 2.23, the prophecy that Jesus should be called a Nazarene (*Ναζωραῖος*). It was not accompanied by an explanation as was Emmanuel in 1.23. Its form shows that it was known to the readers. A Semitic milieu is demanded. The reason for its insertion is to explain the puzzling fact that Jesus did not come from Bethlehem, the town of David. But Stendahl fails to note the possibility that all of this could be contrived Jewishness.

1 Kirster Stendahl, The School of Matthew, First Edition, Uppsala, 1954, p. 80. (All subsequent references to this book are from the First Edition.)

2 Op. cit., pp. 99, 100.

3 Op. cit., p. 183.

4 Op. cit., p. 199.

5 Op. cit., p. 30.

There are other bits of evidence which could occur to any careful reader of the Synoptics. For instance, in Mt. 12.39 Matthew adds, "of the prophet" (cf. Lk. 11.29). A Jew would plainly prefer it to be emphasized that Jonah was the right type and that Jesus was following in the right train.

In 27.3-10, the pericope about Judas' guilt and its results is peculiar to Matthew. Only a Jew would have understood the dread of Judas arising from the curse of Deut. 27.25 on anyone who takes reward to slay an innocent person. Suicide appeared to Judas the only way to rid himself of his curse.

Matthew is so well versed in Jewish customs and law that he could well have been a converted rabbi. The verse "every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old" (13.52) could be a pointer to his identity.

Stendahl is of the opinion that Matthew was a "converted rabbi, not working entirely alone". The saying forbidding Jesus' disciples to be called rabbi (23.8-10) is only "significant if something similar to the schools of the rabbis existed".<sup>1</sup>

Although most of Mark's Aramaisms are omitted<sup>2</sup> Matthew shows a knowledge of Hebrew. Matthew 5.18 mentions יִוָּדָא which is absent from the parallel in Lk. 16.17. To be apposite, the יִוָּדָא must be the yod of the Hebrew alphabet. In Mt. 1.23, Ἑβραίου ἄλφ shows a knowledge of Hebrew.

1 Loc. cit., p. 98.

2 Black writes: "In the non-Marcian narrative portions of Mt. and Lk., apart from the sayings of Jesus, there are far fewer indications of Aramaic influence". Matthew Black, An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts, Third Edition, Oxford, 1967, p. 272. The probability that Mt. did make use of more Aramaic originals for part of his sources is indicated by cases in which Black points out that ambiguity in the Aramaic accounts for the variant readings in Greek. Examples of this are: 13.13 (par Mk. 4.12) where Mt. has ὅτι and Mk. ἵνα which are "both different interpretations of Aramaic" (loc. cit., p. 213) "An Aramaic בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים could be rendered either Lk. 11.48, 'you are building' or 23.31 'you are children of'" (loc. cit., p. 12f.).



According to Goodspeed<sup>1</sup>, the author was the tax collector of 9.9. He has a few quite appealing reasons for saying so, for instance: Matthew's love of figures, the three fourteens in his genealogy and the fact that in 18.23 we are in the world of high finance. On the other hand, tax collectors are not the only people who like figures or who move in the world of high finance. A banker or a Roman civil servant, especially a provincial treasurer, would have these interests too, but at that time would be unlikely to have been converted to Christianity. To some extent this also applies to a wealthy entrepreneur and yet, if we are correct about the Phoenician provenance of the Gospel, the possibility of a wealthy convert is there (cf. Mt. 19.26).

Goodspeed<sup>2</sup> has also observed that Greeks were accustomed to designate the man who put a book into Greek as the author. He cites the LXX, Mark's Gospel and Euclid as examples, though Euclid was in part creator of the science of geometry, as Goodspeed admits, besides its Greek collector and translator. But there could have been exceptions and it is possible that the first Gospel was known initially simply as the Gospel. Later it was felt desirable to associate it with someone. Why not the author of part of it?

Another reason for the author being the tax collector advanced by Goodspeed is the abruptness of Matthew's call, the only individual call in the Synoptics. His call comes after a crisis, the first sign of hostility (9.3,9)<sup>3</sup>.

1. Edgar J. Goodspeed, Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist, Philadelphia, Toronto, 1959, Chap. 7.
2. Op. cit., p. 137.
3. Goodspeed (loc. cit., p. 43) likens Jesus' calling of Matthew to the action of Isaiah who, he claims, employed a secretary in the foreboding that he himself would be destroyed. The secretary would write down Isaiah's words so that they should be preserved. Actually the text he quotes in support (Is. 8.16) does not necessarily involve writing. The message could have been bound and sealed in the hearts of the disciples. Jeremiah would have been a much better example for we know the name of his scribe (Jer. 36.4, etc.) and we know how he defeated the reckless penknife of Jehoiakim (Jer. 36.23). However, Jeremiah would not suit Goodspeed so well because he was not quoted fifteen times by Matthew and he could not have been said to be so obviously in the mind of Matthew's Jesus.

Taking Goodspeed's points with the early connexion of Matthew's name with the First Gospel<sup>1</sup>, might we not say that Matthew, the tax collector, is to be associated with part of M? Goodspeed's evidence is in fact all from M.

But much of Matthew's material cannot be attributed to the Apostle. It is impossible to understand why Matthew, the Evangelist, chose to borrow so much from Mark if he had been Matthew the Apostle, himself an eye witness. For this reason we must agree with McNeile that the Evangelist was "certainly not Matthew, the Apostle"<sup>2</sup>, at any rate if this Matthew is taken to be the author of all of the book. Sherman E. Johnson agrees with this opinion and states:

"A careful reading of Matthew especially when it is compared with Mark, shows it cannot have been written by an eye witness. It is a compendium of church traditions, carefully edited, not the personal observations of a participant."<sup>3</sup>

Chapter 23 is a substantial testimony against wholly Jewish authorship. I feel that while it is not impossible<sup>4</sup> that a Jew wrote such scorching denunciations and plenty of O.T. precedents can be found, e.g. Num. 14.11, 12a; Is. 1.2-6, 10-15; Amos 2.4 ff., we miss the vital doctrine of the faithful Remnant e.g. Num. 14.12b; Is. 1.9; 4.2 ff.; 6.12; Amos 3.12, though an entire community could be annihilated (Jer. 11.21-23). The

1 Kilpatrick, op. cit., p. 3.

2 A. H. McNeile, The Gospel According to St Matthew, London, 1915, p. xxviii.

3 The Interpreter's Bible, ed. George Arthur Buttrick, New York: Nashville, 1957 (12 Vols.) Vol. 7, p. 242.

4 It is not impossible on religious grounds. An ex-Jew could have been hard on his own race because he was so conscious of their privileges (20.2; 22.3,4 - Jews were the first invitees). It is not psychologically impossible. The fearful scathings could as fairly be ascribed to righteous Jewish-Christian indignation against those who had rejected God's Son, as due to Gentile venom. If one were to argue that a Jewish Christian could not make such denunciations against Jews one would have to assume his patriotism to be greater than his love for Christ. There is no reason to say that the utterance of woes means that the utterer hates the people against whom he inveighs them. He may well be proving his real love and concern for them. The cry of 23.37 is one of yearning rather than of hatred and could have been recorded by a Jew or a Gentile (Lk. 13.34).

Remnant may be implicit in the faithfulness of at least some of the twelve Apostles<sup>1</sup> but one may suppose that a Jew would have made it explicit.<sup>2</sup> It is unlikely that an ex-Jew, however zealous a Christian, would have allowed no exceptions among the condemned leaders of his own race. One can hardly imagine that Matthew, the Apostle, knew nothing of Nicodemus' sympathy for Jesus (Jn. 3.2; 19.39). Matthew does mention Joseph of Arimathaea, but calls him simply "a rich man" and "a disciple of Jesus" (27.57) whereas Mk. 15.43 has: "a respected member of the council".<sup>3</sup> Matthew does seem unwilling to admit that any Sadducee, as well as Pharisee, was a disciple.

Matthew does allow that the dregs of Jewish society would enter the Kingdom of God<sup>4</sup> (21.31, 32). On the other hand there is the call of a tax collector named Matthew (9.9) and we have to agree with Goodspeed to the effect that it is hard to account for the unique record of this call, if it did not originate from Matthew, the Apostle.

Ernest L. Abel is convinced that two editors, first a Jew, then a Gentile worked on Matthew. He writes: "The question is whether a Jewish Christian like Matthew would have composed a gospel the tenor of which is the rejection of Israel by its God?" He cites 27.25; 21.43; 20.1-16, and continues:

"the last, the Gentiles, are now the first, the true Israel; (21.28-32) the son who said 'I go sir', but did not, represents the Jews. ... A great deal of the narrative material peculiar to Matthew is due to someone's penchant for fashioning history out of O.T. statements: 27.24, 25 is reminiscent of Deut. 21.7-8; 26.15b is deliberately taken from Zech. 11.12. In 21.1-7 the author is guilty of deliberately twisting his sources so as to agree with Zech. 9.9 and has Jesus riding on two animals at the same time."<sup>5</sup> See further on this pp. 342 ff., below.

- 1 See pp. 271 ff., below.
- 2 Cf. Rom. 11 passim. For a contrary opinion based on 23.39 and my answer to it see p. 342, below.
- 3 Lk. 23.50 calls him "a member of the council", though Jn. 19.38 does not refer to this.
- 4 Since the term as such occurs nowhere in the O.T. and Matthew does not favour it, the use of it here may be ascribed to a Gentile editor. However, as Paul, "a Pharisee of the Pharisees", never writes "Kingdom of heaven", it seems more likely that the term is related to the readers (mostly Gentiles) rather than to the author. For a fuller and better explanation of the phrase in this context, see Green, op. cit., ad. loc., Green's argument tends to support the view that Matthew excludes all Pharisees from the Kingdom. See also Fenton, op. cit., ad. loc.

Abel<sup>1</sup> imagines that the Jews had largely died out of the population in Antioch (sic) and that a Gentile editor had to be found.

Evidence for a Gentile editor may be gained in the universalist note struck in 2.1-12; 4.14-16; 12.14, 21; 28.19. Abel also sees it in "the use of the word *Xp̄lōtōs* as a surname for Jesus (1.1, 16, 18; 11.2; 27.17, 22) which would be unthinkable in a Jew. Since the change from 'kingdom of God' to 'kingdom of heaven' seems to have been deliberate one can only assume that the phrase 'Son of God' (4.3, 6; 14.33; 16.16; 26.13; 27.43, 54) is an editorial phrase in Matthew which clearly denotes Gentile influences"<sup>2</sup>.

Abel's<sup>3</sup> strongest argument is based on the clash in Matthew between the universalist and particularist elements. But the main thrust could be universalism<sup>4</sup> as in 2.1-12; 4.14-16; 8.11; 12.18, 21; 28.19, with particularism (10.5; 15.24) only as temporary tactics. The principle is "to the Jew first" for obvious reasons, but the long term aim is the inclusion of all.<sup>5</sup> So the clash is a strong but not conclusive argument.

G. Strecker<sup>6</sup> also contends for a Gentile redactor to account for the

1. Loc. cit., p. 151.

2 Loc. cit., p. 147 ff. We must object when he renders 12.6 as "something greater than the Law is here". His substitution of "Law" for Temple distorts the main sense of the passage. Although the law disallowed David's action (12.3, 4) it permitted work by the priests (12.5) and the quotation from Hosea (12.7) contrasts mercy (shown by Jesus) with sacrifice (made in the Temple). Thus the immediate context before and after 12.6 is not between Jesus and the law.

3 Loc. cit., p. 148.

4 There is moreover a comparable duality in the O.T. succinctly put by W. D. Davies The Gospel and the Land, Berkeley: Los Angeles: London, 1972, p. 45: "There is a core of particularism in the most universal of the prophets."

5 See Joachim Jeremias, Jesus' Promise to the Nations, London, 1958, passim.

6 Georg Strecker, Der Weg der Gerechtigkeit Untersuchung zur Theologie Matthaus, Gottingen, 1962, p. 15 ff.  
See also Kirster Stendahl, Paul among Jews and Gentiles, London, 1977, p. 128, i.e. ten years later than the Second Edition of The School of Matthew. I. Abrahams, Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels, Cambridge, 1924, Second Series, p. 29f. puts forward an interesting point which could indicate a Gentile editor, as at any rate someone not well acquainted with Jewish burial customs. In Mt. 23.27, 28 the words: 'which outwardly appear beautiful' are "regarded by most critics as a gloss ... The gloss would be much more likely to arise from a knowledge of Roman than of Jewish sepulchral ornaments".

apparent contradiction between the universalist and particularist elements in Matthew. So Abel is in good company.

The aim of Stendahl in The School of St Matthew (passim) is mainly to prove that such a school existed and that Matthew is a handbook issued by that school. This he argues effectively. Assuming that this is established may we not envisage it as a school for Gentiles with a Gentile teacher or teachers? Its object would be to train Gentiles in the Gospel and in the O.T. and anti-Jewish controversy using the rabbinic style of O.T. interpretation. This would explain the paradox whereby Zech. 9.9 is quoted (21.5) yet the parallelism of Hebrew poetry is not understood in that two asses are believed to be present (21.2, 3, 6, 7)<sup>1</sup>.

We may conclude that the hypothesis of two editors is the one which best accounts for the facts. As the Gospel probably arose out of Jewish controversy the Gentile would be compelled to research deeply into Jewish thought. Certainly much and probably most of the material cannot have come from the pen of Matthew the Apostle. The early association<sup>2</sup> of his name with it is probably due to some parts<sup>3</sup>, certainly 9.9, that can be traced to him. Thus we may have a critique of Judaism from two points of view, the Gentile one erring by too wholesale a condemnation of Jewish leaders, but throwing some objective light on their typical sins of evasiveness (15.1 ff.); blindness (16.1-4); 23.16, 17; externality (23.25) etc. which to some extent sharpen the criteria of judgement.

1 This passage contradicts Stendahl's claim that Matthew had probably been trained in Palestine. Whatever may be said (see Appendix I) about the possibility that Matthew nonsensically believes Jesus to ride two asses at once, he certainly believes that two are present in contrast with Mk. 11.2, 3, 5, 7; Lk. 19.30-35; Jn. 12.14, 15.

2 Papias (A.D. 130-150) quoted by Eusebius, History of the Church, trans. with notes by H. S. Lawlor and J. E. L. Oulton (2 Vols.), London, 1954, III.XXXIX, 16: "... Matthew compiled the oracles in the Hebrew language ..."

3 These would belong to M and possibly include some Q sayings cf. Sayings, pp. 17 ff. This being what I believe, I use the word 'Jewish' of Matthew to refer to style, and not necessarily to mean that the author of all the parts mentioned was a Jew.

### SECTION 3. WRITINGS WHICH POSSIBLY INFLUENCED MATTHEW

Some of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Rabbinic material may have had an effect on Matthew. A few selected examples follow. The Mekilta and the Pirke Aboth are of special value.<sup>1</sup>

At one point the Damascus document (XVII)<sup>2</sup> comes very close to Mt. 5.22 as both forbid speaking to a brother in anger, but the former does not refer to final judgement. On the same subject, the Talmud has: "One who shames another in public has no position in the world to come."<sup>3</sup> This is closer to Matthew in that it is related to final judgement, but it is less close owing to the phrase 'in public'. Neither the Damascus document nor Matthew necessarily mean that the angry words are spoken in public. The idea of speaking with 'a hard heart' as the Essene writing has it is much more akin to the anger which Matthew forbids than the externality of the Talmudic reference.

Coincidentally the part of the Mekilta<sup>4</sup> most helpful in understanding Matthew also applies to Mt. 5.22. In a parable similar to that of the talents (Mt. 25.14-30) the man in charge of the straw, equivalent to the servant with one talent, is designated 'Reka' by his fellow servants in a clearly pejorative sense. This makes it unlikely that those who hold 'Raka' to be harmless are correct.

1 On the importance of the Mekilta and its proximity to the time of Matthew see W.O.E. Oesterley and G. H. Box, A Short Survey of the Literature of Rabbinical and Mediaeval Judaism, London, 1920, p.69 and Jacob Z. Lauterbach, Mekilta de-Rabbi Ishmael, Philadelphia, 1949, p.xix. All quotations from the Mekilta are from the latter, abbreviated to Mek. See Appendix A.

On the value of the Pirke Aboth for understanding the N.T. in general and for the datings of most of its parts see W.O.E. Oesterley The Sayings of the Jewish Fathers, New York, 1919, p.xiff. (see Appendix B.) References to it have been abbreviated to Ab.

2 Miller Burrows The Dead Sea Scrolls, London, 1956, p.362f.

3 b BM 58b quoted by Moses Maimonides, The Commandments, (2 Vols.) ed. Charles B. Chavel, London, New York, 1967, p.239, No.251.

4 Mek. 2. 236 (Tr. Bah. 5.88).

In the Pirke Aboth<sup>1</sup> there is a parable comparable with Mt. 7.24-27 in the tree with many roots and few branches and the other oppositely endowed. Judgement according to works (Mt. 16.27) also figures in the Aboth (e.g. 2.1; 3.22). Perhaps the most significant saying, which may have a bearing on Mt. 18.6ff, is Aboth (5.21): "... the disciples of Bileam (Balaam) go down to Gehinnom". Balaam may here be taken as a type of those who encouraged Israel to apostatize.<sup>2</sup> This could be doubly significant in that Jesus was a potential source of offence (Mt. 11.6); this is connected, through the use of the same verb with Mt. 16.23 and Mt. 18.6ff. for in 16.23 and probably in 18.6 it means 'to cause to apostatize'; Herford explains that the rabbis reckoned Balaam to be a type of Jesus, for both encouraged Israel to apostatize.<sup>3</sup>

There are besides many comparable texts, samples of which are: Ab. 5.13 cf. Mt. 7.22 on anger; Ab. 3.23 cf. Mt. 22.1-14 especially the Aboth phrase "everything is ready for the banquet" cf. Mt. 22.4; Ab. 1.7: "Despair not of divine retribution" cf. Mt. 16.27; 24.28; 25.31ff. etc. on the certainty of judgement; Ab. 3.23, the phrase "whether he knows it or not", cf. Mt. 24.39 "they did not know", in the context of judgement; Ab. 1.5 has a warning which speaks of judgement: "Every time a man talks overmuch with women he brings evil upon himself and he escapes from studying the words of Torah and his end is that he inherits Gehinnom" cf. Mt. 5.28ff. Matthew's Christology is heightened by the replacing of the Shekinah, ineffably venerable; Ab. 3.3, with Jesus, Mt. 18.20; likewise, Ab. 3.6, the yoke of the Torah, cf. Mt. 11.29, Jesus' yoke.

Universalism appears in the teaching that strangers are beloved (Mek. 3.140, cf. Mt. 25.35, 43) the high regard in which proselytizing

1 Ab. 3.25.

2 Geza Vermes, Post Biblical Jewish Studies, London, 1975, p. 172. Vermes says that Balaam was an heresiarch.

3 R. Travers Herford, Christianity in Talmud and Midrash, London, 1903, pp. 73ff. where he goes into the matter at length.

was held (Mek. 2.173 cf. Mt. 28.18-20) and a straightforward welcome to everyone to learn the Torah Mek. 2.198, 267 cf. Mt. 11.28f.

Universalism is also found in Ab. 1.12; 3.23. In the latter the phrase "the net is cast over all living" is akin to Mt. 13.47-50.

Matthew, however, needed to look no further than the O.T. for universalism e.g. Gen. 18.25; Is. 2.2ff; 11.10; 42.1,6 (which he quoted); 49.22; Amos 9.7 etc. This is not important for judgement but it weakens the case for a Gentile editor for Matthew.

Many other examples could be given but while there is much on ethics in both the Mekilta and the Aboth and a considerable amount on judgement in the latter, there is little which carries both an ethical demand and a threat of judgement at the same place.

There is a great deal of other rabbinic evidence of Matthew's Jewishness but this will either be noted in the relevant part of the consideration of Matthew's text or be relegated to an appendix, where also some of the above material will be more fully dealt with. Gnosis will also be briefly considered.

#### Note on dates of the above Aboth sayings

The following are the known authors of the Aboth sayings, abbreviated Ab., with their dates as given by W.O.E. Oesterley in The Sayings of the Jewish Fathers, to which the page references apply:

- Ab. 1.6 Joshua ben Perachiah, undated.
- Ab. 1.7 Nittai the Arbelite, disciple of Jose ben Joezer of Zeredah who lived about 140 B.C. (p.3 n.6).
- Ab. 1.12 Hillel active B.C. 30-10 A.D. (p.9 n.4).
- Ab. 2.5 Hillel.
- Ab. 3.3 R. Chananiah ben Teradyon, martyred A.D. 135 (p.30 n.3).
- Ab. 3.6 R. Nechuniah ben ka-Kanah, first century A.D. (p.33 n.3).
- Ab. 3.15 Eleazar ben Azariah, died about 120 A.D. (p.45 n.4).
- Ab. 3.22 R. Akiba, killed about 135 A.D. (p.41 n.)
- Ab. 3.23 " " " " " " "
- Ab. 5.13 Anon.
- Ab. 5.16 Anon.

Thus it can be seen that most of these could have influenced Matthew or that they represent a pool of Jewish thought at or near his time.

Reference to the appropriate tractate within the Mekilta has only been given once when considered very important.



## SECTION 4. JAMNIA

The evidence that the members of Matthew's church felt the impact of Jamnia is very strong. (This lends some support to the view that Tyre or Sidon was a more likely place of origin than Antioch, for their respective distances from Jamnia were 80, 100 and 300 miles, approx.). Matthew discloses the influence of Jamnia in the following ways, which are largely a summary of the work of Davies:<sup>1</sup>

1. The expressions, "the Jews" (28.15); "their synagogues" (4.23; 9.35; 10.17; 12.9; 13.54); "your synagogues", (23.34); "their scribes" (7.29) imply a radical separation between Church and Synagogue such as was intended in the Birkath ha-Minim. Kilpatrick notes that the pronominal genitive *αὐτῶν* is attached to *συναγωγῇ* regularly by Matthew but not by Mark and Luke. In Matthew attempts to explain it by the context are forced and far-fetched. The only satisfying explanation is the effect of the Birkath ha-Minim.<sup>2</sup>

2. It is possible to claim that references to the maltreatment of Christians are too numerous to be regarded as merely sporadic, and suggest a deliberate policy on Jewish Christianity such as emanated from Jamnia. Thus 5.11 seems to imply the use of the ban; 23.34 (cf. 10.17) points to flogging and even crucifixion (though this was not a Jewish punishment<sup>3</sup>); 10.23 pursuit from town to town, *διώκειν*, having acquired for Mt. a special significance in describing persecution.<sup>4</sup>

Davies thinks that "the uncontrolled hatred" implied here is more than Jamnia would have been likely to indulge. He seems to believe that the behaviour of the Jamnian Pharisees had to be always consistent with a norm of sobriety. This was not necessarily so. The Birkath ha-Minim was indeed, in its early form discovered by Schechter,<sup>5</sup> an ugly prayer.

1 The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount, Cambridge, 1966, p. 296ff.

2 Op. cit., p.110. See also Davies, SSM, pp. 276,296.

3 It had been before Herod: Martin Hengel, Crucifixion, London, 1977, pp.84,5.

4 SSM, p.297.

5 Quoted by Davies loc. cit., p.275, and Kilpatrick op. cit., p.111.

The crucial words are: "Let Christians and Minim perish in a moment, let them be blotted out of the book of the living and let them not be written with the righteous." But this was not the only example of extreme hostility. According to Tosephta Baba Mesia 11.33, "Gentiles and those who keep small cattle are neither drawn out of nor pushed into (a pit); Minim are pushed in and not drawn out." It is difficult not to see these words as licences to kill. Therefore it is hard to see why Davies thinks as he does unless he believes that the Jamnian bark was very much worse than its bite, so much so as to render the bark rather hollow.

Both Kilpatrick<sup>1</sup> and Davies,<sup>2</sup> the latter tentatively, set the date of the Birkath ha-Minim at A.D.85. Davies produces abundant evidence of contrast between Jews and Christians.<sup>3</sup> So, it seems probable that persecution of Christians by Jews did take place. Motive and opportunity were both present.

What are we to make of what Perrin called the "rancorous dialogue"<sup>4</sup> between Christian and Pharisee shown in Mt.23 particularly? Kilpatrick<sup>5</sup> observes that in Mark the differences between Jesus and the Pharisees lie in certain controversial issues whereas in Matthew the animus is directed against the Pharisees themselves in distinction from the controversial issues. At Mt. 3.7 "Pharisees and Sadducees", for which Luke has "crowds" (Lk. 3.7), shows that "generation of vipers" is directed in part against the Pharisees. At Mt. 12.24 the Pharisees are introduced (Mark has scribes, Mk. 3.22). Luke in his partial parallel (Lk. 11.14,15) has "some of the people". In the parallel to Mt.12.38, Lk. 11.29 again has crowds instead of Matthew's scribes and Pharisees. Mark has no parallel. So when

1 Op. cit., p.111.

2 Op. cit., p.276.

3 Op. cit., p.277f.

4 Norman Perrin, The Resurrection Narratives, London, 1977, p.48.

5 Op. cit., p.119ff.

the venomous phrase "generation of vipers" is again introduced at 12.34 and *πουχδλῖς* at 12.39, Matthew's description of them is stronger than that of Luke. The addition of verses 12-14, (no parallel in Mark) to the passage in Mt. 15.1-20 (Mk. 7.1-23) turns the controversy into an attack on the Pharisees themselves. This is specially significant for the theme of judgement for Matthew is saying that a group of people who evade the Fifth Commandment, who do lip service to God while their heart is not in it, who teach "precepts of men" as if they were doctrines of God, are plants not planted by "my heavenly Father" (Mt. 15.13). A probable allusion to Is. 60.21 brings the idea that the Pharisees ought to have known that only the genuine righteous are planted by God. Like Matthew they were people of a Book. Six times Matthew makes Jesus enquire "Have you not/never read?" (12.3,5; 19.4; 21.16,42; 22.31). On three of these occasions the question is addressed specifically to Pharisees and once to scribes along with chief priests.

The final use of the phrase "brood of vipers" (23.33) has no parallels. We must agree then that Perrin is correct. The attitude to the Pharisees is "rancorous", "positively venomous".<sup>1</sup> This can only be explained by the Birkath ha-Minim.

Kilpatrick summarizes thus: "We must not infer that the controversies had been lost sight of in a mutual antipathy, but that they had hardened into a sectarian hostility."<sup>2</sup>

A passage penned by Perrin neatly summarizes a matter which we cannot take time to pursue further. It implies interaction between the Pharisees at Jamnia and the church from which and to which Matthew addressed his Gospel:

1 Op. cit., p.48.

2 Op. cit., p.121.

"There are striking phenomenological parallels between Mt. and the Pharisees at Jamnia. Both understood religion as essentially a matter of response to verbal revelation and both felt the need for the revelation to be authoritatively interpreted within the community of which it was the constitutive base."<sup>1</sup>

This discussion tends to show that when Matthew speaks of judgement he is likely to refer to those criteria that apply to religious persons rather than to the sins of non-religious or profane persons.

3. It was at Jamnia that the term "rabbi" became a title for ordained scholars rather than a mark of courtesy.<sup>2</sup> Thus only Jamnian controversy can help us to understand 23.5-10. By contrast with the pretentiousness of Jamnia, Jesus was "gentle and lowly in heart" (11.29; 21.5). He was supremely a teacher who taught by example.

4. Matthew is particularly interested in the fall of Jerusalem, which occasioned the removal of the Sages to Jamnia.<sup>3</sup> This is quite a weighty, though indirect consideration. In 22.7 and 23.37f. reference is made to the destruction of Jerusalem. The context of the latter is a fulmination against the Pharisees whereas in the comparable place in Lk. 13.31-33, the Pharisees are friendly and warn Jesus about Herod's designs.

In 16.21 Matthew makes a direct reference to Jerusalem absent from Mark and Luke. In 21.10 Matthew records that the city was disturbed whereas Mark and Luke are silent on the matter. Matthew also notes the disturbance in Jerusalem at the arrival of the Magi (2.3) and this whole passage is peculiar to him. Matthew's special concern is also revealed in 28.11 and 27.53. Even the Jerusalem crowds are hostile to Jesus during his passion, though not uniformly so in Luke (Lk. 22.2; 23.27).

1 Op. cit., p.58.

2 SSM, p.298.

3 Ibid.

5. The beginnings of the Mishnah are traceable to Jamnia. So codification was in the air. Such we do find in Matthew throughout. His genealogy, for instance, is governed by the mystic fourteen. His "Abraham begat" (1.1) corresponds to "Moses received" of Mishnah Aboth 1.7 and ARN 1.1.

6. The mention of Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and the wife of Uriah was possibly an attempt to answer some of the abuse hurled at the obscure mother of Jesus and the doubt cast upon his legitimacy.<sup>1</sup> Matthew is the only Gospel which mentions these women of whom two committed harlotry, one was a Moabitess and one, an adultress. Even David's family tree was not free of taint. Yet for Matthew Mary is a virgin. He quotes from the LXX which uses *παρθένος* to translate *ʿalmah* (= young woman) at Is. 7.14. (This is evidence that he was Greek speaking). Matthew is perhaps answering the charges against Mary obliquely. If God can use Tamar etc. why not a pure woman even if obscure?

7. Consistent with Jamnian influence on Matthew is that his attacks were chiefly mounted against the Pharisees. To Kilpatrick,<sup>2</sup> they were the one important Jewish sect contemporary with Matthew. Mark reflects Jewish Palestine before the war of A.D. 66-70, while Matthew is more akin to the Rabbinism of Jamnia. In Mark, Jesus is in contact with Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians and most of all the common people (Mk. 12.37c for instance: "the great throng heard him gladly" has no parallel in Matthew or Luke). In Matthew the Herods and the Herodians almost fade out as do the historical Sadducees. The Pharisees and the controversies with them come into the forefront and beside them even the common people take a second place.<sup>3</sup>

1 Kilpatrick gives evidence of this, op. cit., p.113.

2 Op. cit., p.121.

3 See Kilpatrick, op. cit., p.106, from part of which this paragraph is a modification.

8. Another matter which possibly indicates contact between Matthew's church and Jamnia is the way in which teaching was set out. At the fall of Jerusalem, R. Johanan ben Zakkai reformulated the three pillars of Judaism as follows: 1. Study and teaching Torah; 2. Prayer; 3. Performance of all the commandments.

Davies sees the teaching of Jesus set out in a roughly parallel, triadic way:

- |    |           |                |
|----|-----------|----------------|
| 1. | 5.17-18   | Torah of Jesus |
| 2. | 6.1-18    | True worship   |
| 3. | 6.19-7.12 | True Piety     |

though in substance this is closer to the pillars of Simeon the Just - the law, the Temple service, deeds of loving kindness.<sup>1</sup>

Matthew's section on worship is again triadic: almsgiving, prayer, fasting, all of which were emphasized at Jamnia.<sup>2</sup>

It might seem from the foregoing that Matthew could not have been a Jew. He was too severe on his fellow Jews. It is at least possible however that his severity was intended in love. More in sorrow than in anger he saw his nation rejecting its Messiah and tried every means of warning them. In any case, most of his denunciations are aimed at the leaders. Paul S. Minear<sup>3</sup> sees the crowd in Matthew as filling a highly positive role as followers of Jesus, accepting his prophetic authority. An exception has, of course, to be made of the crowd at the Trial before Pilate. Except to suggest that Matthew's analysis of the character of the Pharisees might require some inside information, our study of the Jamnian relationship does not throw any real light on his identity.

Matthew is writing for a persecuted church and so one might expect a statement about the judgement on the persecutors of God's people as in so many of the Psalms, e.g. Pss. 59.9,10; 69.22,23; 109.6-20,28,29; 137.9;

1 SSM, p.305.

2 Loc. cit., p.307.

3 "The Disciples and the Crowds in the Gospel of Matthew" Anglican Theological Review, Supp. Sec. 3 ('74) passim (pp. 28-44).

139.16; or as in Revelation 6.10. One does find threats as in 15.13,14; woes as in 23. passim, and one direful threat of final judgement in 23.33, but the warnings of final judgement for sins of omission, 25. passim, outweigh the passages 21.28-41, 23.33 which warn of final judgement for active persecution.

In 6.1-18 the chief, and in 23.1-32 one of the chief, sins is ostentation. One might suppose that this would incur final judgement but Matthew is too profound for that. He goes beneath the ostentation to the attitude and announced final judgement not on those who make a parade of their piety in the ways mentioned but on what underlies their self-glorification, namely their basic selfishness, their disregard for the needs of people. Matthew does record what seem to be final judgements:- "depart from me ..." 7.23; 25.12; "the door was shut" 25.10 - on what amounted to outward profession without real allegiance, but these instances have not quite the same flavour as 6.1-18 and 23.1-32, because the emphasis in the former cases is on self-satisfaction and complacency.

The church to which Matthew belongs and for whom he writes has evidently a set of church leaders roughly parallel to the leaders of the synagogue at Jamnia. 23.7 warns the leaders not to be called "rabbi", so there must have been people who exercised a similar function. 23.34 designates those who will be sent by Jesus (from Matthew's church) as prophets and wise men and scribes, all of which were typical of a Jewish community.

Matthew is the only evangelist who quotes Hos. 6.6(LXX) and he twice does it (9.3; 12.7). This is specially significant, because Johanan ben Zakkai adopted a similar point of view. To one who grieved at the loss of the place of atonement on seeing the Temple in ruins, R. Johanan

replied: "Do not grieve, my son, for we have an atonement which is just as good namely, deeds of mercy, as the Scripture says 'For I desire mercy and not sacrifice'" (Hos. 6.6 (Hebrew Bible)).<sup>1</sup>

It would be hard to improve upon Davies' summary of the possible Jamnian influence on Matthew. Though he deals only with the Sermon on the Mount what he says may be extended to cover much else of Matthew's material, e.g. Mt. 19.1-9 and the texts which Kilpatrick adduces mentioned at the beginning of this section. Davies writes:

"The juxtaposition of it (Matthew) with Jamnia is not a leap into the dark, but into the twilight of available resources. But, this juxtaposition, it seems to me, best explains the emergence of Matthew's manifesto. It was the desire and necessity to present a formulation of the ways of the New Israel at a time when the rabbis were engaged in a parallel task for the old Israel that provided the outside stimulus for the Evangelist to shape the SM."<sup>2</sup>

He closes by noting that the Sermon is also to be understood "in terms of interests indigenous to the Church."<sup>3</sup>

1 Abot de R. Nathan 4.5; Bacher, Tannaiten I. 39, quoted by Moore, op. cit., Vol. I, p.503.

2 SSM, p.313.

3 Ibid.



## CHAPTER 2 - THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

## INTRODUCTION

As we shall see in considering the meaning of 7.24-27 and "these words of mine" in particular, the whole of the Sermon on the Mount may be taken to be concerned with judgement. Anyone who keeps the sayings will survive the judgement. Anyone who does not is heading for destruction.

However, by the severity of the threats he attaches to disobedience in some cases, Matthew seems to indicate that he does not regard the Sermon on the Mount as all on one level of importance. This thesis is, in any case, restricted to the consideration of those passages where judgement is unequivocally indicated.

"Eschatology", "eschatological" will be used strictly in the sense of the end things or pertaining to the end things and only to relieve the tedium of repeating the phrase "end things" or the word "final" when referring to judgement.

From here on the passages in Matthew relevant to my theme will be considered seriatim, except that 18.23ff. will be taken with 6.14,15.

Matthew writes of two levels of judgement; temporal and eternal. Judgement is here used in the sense of final judgement, a separation between good and evil with eternal consequences, but lesser judgements cannot altogether fail to be considered, e.g. when they shade into one another as in 5.21-25.

E. Schweizer pointedly enquires about this saying: "... where would there be enough courts to carry out all these trials?"<sup>1</sup> that is, if all who were angry with their brother and all who used the term Raka were haled before them. As we shall see below when 5.22 is more fully discussed

1 Op. cit., ad loc.

the apparently abrupt transition or great gulf between the first two human judgements, and the judgement of hell, divine judgement is not as abrupt or wide as some might suppose. The inadequacy of human courts does not in any case render the teaching invalid or ridiculous. Hyperbole is quite acceptable in other contexts, e.g. the swallowing of a camel (23.14), hump, hair and hooves. Besides, Jesus did not claim that all offenders were, or would be, judged but that they were liable to it. Matthew's Jesus does not therefore necessarily picture a long waiting list of offenders and overloaded courts. By no means all offenders have ever been brought to human justice, but all are to be gathered for judgement by the Son of man 25.31f. On current Jewish practice, David Daube observes: "mere insulting words were not enough to justify (legal) proceedings".<sup>1</sup> If this is a correct summary of rabbinic attitudes, then at least the utterance of the word "raka" would not be intended by Matthew to lead literally to the case being heard by the Council. So it is probable that we ought to take the first two judgements parabolically. Even if we were to take them literally we might arrive at something like this: "He who adopts a wrong attitude in his inter-personal relationships (anger, Raka) is liable to human judgement; he who pronounces on the state of the soul of another before God ("damned fool" μωρε) is liable to divine judgement." The first is a sort of foretaste or forewarning of the other, cf. 1 Cor. 5.5 where Paul exhorts the deliverance of an offender to Satan for the destruction of the flesh that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus". As Windisch observes: "law for Jesus is a parable for morality. He teaches morality not jurisprudence ..."<sup>2</sup>

1 David Daube, The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism, (Jordan Lectures 1962), London, 1956, p.260.

2 Hans Windisch, The Meaning of the Sermon on the Mount, Philadelphia, 1937, p.94.

Take the next two verses, 5.25,26, as another example. Of them A. Tholuck (the thoroughness of whose work on the Sermon has not been surpassed) wrote:

"Expositors separate into two classes. The first regards it as a prudential maxim ... The second acknowledges that in respect of their primary signification the words apply to the connection in which a man stands to human justice in like manner as the punishments mentioned at v.22, but suppose that, just as there, so here also, the relation to the divine judgement is implied under these forms."<sup>1</sup>

Even if we hold that Matthew was being merely prudential here we cannot evade the application to final judgement of the same theme literally in 6.14 and parabolically in 18.24-35. It would therefore be strange if Matthew could have written merely prudentially at this point when he must have had the other references in mind.

Before considering the Sermon we should perhaps consider the preaching of John the Baptist (3.7-12), the first obvious mention of judgement in Matthew. One criterion of judgement is repentance with appropriate fruits. These fruits are not specified as they are in Lk. 3.10-14. This is probably deliberate on the part of Matthew and Bonnard indicates the reason when he writes:

"ici encore le bon fruit ne représente pas des pratiques particulières agréées par Dieu mais un comportement global de l'homme sincèrement repentant comme au v. 8."<sup>2</sup>

A turning of the total personality towards God and His righteousness is most likely what Matthew has in mind here. This is connected with the warning not to trust in human descent, i.e. from Abraham (cf. John 1.13, "born, not of blood ... but of God"). Nor should they trust, it is implied, in the mere outward sign of God's covenant with Abraham, circumcision, but rather in that for which circumcision stood, a new beginning. Those who have misplaced confidence in bodily descent need to be reminded of the

1 A. Tholuck, Exposition of the Sermon on the Mount, Edinburgh, 1834, Vol. 1, p.262.

2 Pierre Bonnard, L'Evangile selon St. Matthieu, Neuchatel, 1963, ad loc.

immense power of God, power to raise up children to Abraham from stones.

The Baptist's declaration must have deeply shocked entrenched prejudice. The importance of Abraham to an Israelite can hardly be exaggerated. He was the quintessence of substitutionary merit. Edersheim observes:

"Abraham was represented (by the rabbis) as sitting at the gate of Gehenna to deliver any Israelite who otherwise might have been consigned to its terrors ... The ships on the sea were preserved through the merit of Abraham; the rain descended on account of it. For his sake alone had Moses been allowed to ascend into heaven to receive the law; for his sake the sin of the golden calf had been forgiven; ... Daniel had been heard for the sake of Abraham."<sup>1</sup>

The warning of John was in the stark prophetic line: "...every one shall die for his own sin" (Jer. 31.30) "the soul that sins shall die" (Ezek. 18.4). Merit cannot be borrowed from one's ancestors. Matthew perhaps hints later that it cannot be borrowed from anyone (25.9). Those who preferred the rabbinic tradition above exposed their deafness to the prophets. Mistaken confidence in bodily acts and descent become then criteria of judgement. We may note that Matthew directs the attack at the Pharisees and Sadducees; Mark has no parallel; Luke says John addressed the crowds. Matthew has seen fit to attack pride in ritual and in race and materialism for which Pharisees and Sadducees were infamous.

Do John the Baptist's axe, fan and fire refer to final judgement? It is doubtful whether this can really be answered. Bonnard writes: "avec Jean-Baptiste et l'arrivée imminente du Christ, le jugement s'accomplit déjà contre les fils d'Israel."<sup>2</sup>

With this McArthur<sup>3</sup> agrees. The word "now" (3.10) and the present tenses, "the axe is laid, κτετα, the tree is hewn down, ἐκκόπεται, ...

1 A. Edersheim, LTJM, Vol. 1, p.271.

2 Op. cit., ad loc.

3 H. K. McArthur, Understanding the Sermon on the Mount, New York, 1960, p.93.

indicate imminent judgement. On the other hand the last three verbs in John's proclamation are future ("will cleanse ... *διὰ καθαρίει*, will gather ... *συνάξει*, will burn ... *κατ' καύσει* (3.12)) and indicate some delay. To say that John anticipated judgement starting immediately does not necessarily mean that he believed it would shortly be finalized. However, the fact that it had not started by the time he was imprisoned by Herod wrung from his heart the question "are you he who is to come or shall we look for another?" (11.3). Herod and Herodias were obvious candidates for judgement, but so far nothing had happened to them. John may have viewed judgement in the terms of ancient Israel i.e. bodily destruction as a punishment was also God's final judgement.<sup>1</sup> The axe should probably also have fallen, in his view, on those who had simply failed to produce good fruit. So, taken with the analogy of chaff, the keynote is struck on sin by omission. Chaff is not particularly harmful, just light and worthless.

The harvest symbolism is taken up in chapter 13 where the final judgement is clearly and explicitly in view (13.42).

John saw Jesus as Judge and envisaged this judgement as near at hand (3.2). Jesus was at hand, so the verb *ἐγγίγω*. Of *ἐγγίκεν* in Mark (Mk. 1.15, par. Mt. 4.17), the same word as in the mouth of John

1 This is implicit in the meaning of the word Sheol, grave, pit, place of departed spirits. It is also implicit in many places such as Ps. 55.15 where: "let death come upon them" is equivalent to "let them go down to Sheol alive" and in v.23 where the Psalmist affirms: "men of blood and treachery shall not live out half their days". The implication is that this life is all the real life that anyone is going to get, for life in Sheol is dim and shadowy. Pss. 88.10; 115.17 indicate that the dead cannot praise God; Ps. 6.5 that in death there is no remembrance of God and "in Sheol who can give thee praise?", expects the answer "noone". In view of these typical attitudes to death and Sheol, the death penalty, given as a sentence as for murder (Num. 35.16-19, 21, 30), or adultery (Lev. 20.10) is intended to represent final judgement. (For a fuller treatment of this matter, see below p.87f.).

in Mt. 3.2,<sup>1</sup> Cranfield, answering Fuller, points out: "... of the thirty-five times it occurs in the New Testament (apart from the times it refers to the kingdom) it is used twenty-four times in a spatial sense ... It is unwise to brush aside the majority of occurrences."<sup>2</sup>

The proclamation, the Judge is at the gate, paves the way for a criterion of judgement in addition to that of repentance, namely, reaction to Jesus' person.

It is notable that the Sadducees are included with the Pharisees as the chief butts of John's denunciations.

Kilpatrick notes that, comparing Matthew with Mark, there is "a decreasing interest in Herod and Herodians",<sup>3</sup> Herod the Great cannot be replaced in Chapter 2, nor Herod Antipas in 14.1-12, but Matthew substitutes "... of the Sadducees" (16.6) for Mk. 8.15 "... of Herod" and Mk. 3.6, "... of the Herodians" is not reproduced by Matthew. To this evidence Kilpatrick adds: "We should expect to find similar treatment of the Sadducees in view of their loss of importance after A.D.70. But the name occurs seven times in Matthew, as often as in the whole of the rest of the New Testament together."<sup>4</sup>

He also points out a difference between Matthew and Mark in their records of the same question by the Sadducees, the question about the resurrection: (Mt. 22.23-31, Mk. 12.18-27).

"In Mark the Sadducees are introduced as follows: καὶ ἐρχόμενοι ΣΑΔΔΟΥΚΑΙΟΙ πρὸς αὐτὸν οὕτως λέγουσιν ἀνδράσιν μὴ εἶναι: this means the Sadducees are the party in Judaism which denies a resurrection. Mt. 22.23 reads: προσῆλθεν αὐτῷ ΣΑΔΔΟΥΚΑΙΟΙ ΛΕΓΟΝΤΕΣ ἀνδράσιν μὴ εἶναι:

from this modification we need infer only that there were Sadducees

1 This is John's prelude to the theme of judgement in 3.7-12.

2 C.E.B. Cranfield, The Gospel according to St Mark, Cambridge, 1963, p.67,68.

3 Op. cit., p.120f.

4 Ibid.

who denied the resurrection, not that they did so as a party. This suggests that, in Matthew, Sadducees was a more inclusive term than in Mark and in history, that it embraces all non-Christian, non-Pharisaic Jews, corresponding to the Rabbinic use of Minim, with the Christian Jews excluded. That such Jews existed at the time is clear from Jewish sources ...

The Minim are designated as heretics and apostates, traditores, Epicureans, deniers of the Tora, those who have separated themselves from the ways of the community, those who confess not the resurrection of the dead, those who have sinned and made the people to sin ..."

Kilpatrick infers that Sadducees denote non-Pharisaic Jews, all Jews who were not Pharisees.<sup>1</sup> This inference is hard to refute, though it needs to be qualified.

When Matthew makes John direct his fulmination against these two groups he is perhaps setting a keynote of his Gospel in two ways: to mark the theme of judgement with one of its criteria, unrepentance, and to show that while many of his warnings were addressed to Pharisees and scribes only, some, as in 16.1,6,11,12 were addressed to all Jews.

Kilpatrick's view seems cogent provided its application is limited to the Jews who opposed Jesus and assuming that at any rate in the short run Jews could be favourable to Jesus without becoming Christians. Kilpatrick has evidently overlooked the fact that not all the Jews were hostile (he says that when Matthew refers to the Sadducees he does not do so in at all a friendly attitude).<sup>2</sup> It may be assumed that Matthew gave at least limited approval to the crowd who shouted: "Hosanna to the Son of David!..." (21.9). At any rate they acknowledged Jesus as a prophet (21.11) as others had done before this (16.14). While the

1 Ibid.

2 Op. cit., p.120.

Palm Sunday crowd may have been largely Galilean in complexion, most of them must have been Jews, for Gentiles could hardly be excited about David's son. The same assumption may be made about the people cited by the disciples at Caesarea Philippi (16.14), for again Gentiles could hardly be expected to refer to Elijah, Jeremiah or the prophets.

We may therefore conclude that Sadducees were for the reasons cogently advanced by Kilpatrick all the non-Pharisaic Jews, but we must add the qualification, "who were hostile to Jesus."

How far are the sayings in the Sermon about judgement concerned with final judgement?

McArthur<sup>1</sup> sees only some 40% of the Sermon on the Mount as eschatological. There would seem to be a good ground for saying that it all concerns end things on the basis of the parable of the two builders and its preface: "... whoever hears these sayings of mine ..." (7.24). The word "these", *τούτους*, is peculiar to Matthew, so he seems to be indicating the whole of the Sermon. There are good grounds for the claim that the parable is one of final judgement as we shall see when we come to it. If these grounds are valid then it must follow that the entire Sermon provides a hunting ground for criteria of judgement. Yet, as it is proposed to deal only with those sayings which deal with final judgement explicitly, I reproduce only the relevant parts of McArthur's findings.

1 Op. cit., p.91.



<u>Explicit</u> <u>Eschatology</u> <sup>1</sup>	<u>Possible</u> <u>Eschatology</u>	<u>No.</u> <u>Eschatology</u>	
5. 19-20	The old law	5. 13b	Salt
5. 21-26	Murder		
5. 27-30	Adultery	5. 31-32	Divorce
6. 15	Warning attached to Lord's prayer	6. 22-23	The sound eye
	7. 1-2 Judging	7. 3-5	Beam and mote
		7. 6	Profaning the holy
7. 13-14	The narrow gate		
7. 15-20	False prophets (partly)		
7. 21-23	"Lord, Lord"		
7. 24-27	The two Houses		

Much of this scheme is challengable. A desperate fate awaits savourless salt. If "it is cast out" (5.13b) is not a periphrasis for the action of God, and men are the agents both of casting out and treading under, it is strange that sentence is not rephrased making men the subject of both clauses, "men cast it out and tread it underfoot". This would be more natural.

Adultery was punishable by death and the Jew made no distinction between bodily death under the law and final judgement. So if divorce leads to adultery one might well suppose that this section is at least in the column "possible eschatology".

1 The word eschatology has been so abused that I would favour its replacement by "discourse on final things". In view of an article by M. L'Abbe' Jean Carmignac, "Les Dangers de L'Eschatologie" (NTS, Vol. 17 ('70-'71) pp. 365-390), I have usually used the word "final" for eschatological in this thesis. This avoids problems connected with the word eschatology such as "realized eschatology". However, as observed on p.42, I have occasionally used it as defined there and to avoid tedium.

7.1,2 on the basis of the passive tenses ought to be in the explicit category. Strack-Billerbeck<sup>1</sup> give numerous parallels from Jewish literature confirming that the passive refers to God's judgement, though in many of them there is no clear distinction between present and future judgement. Perhaps both are meant in the saying attributed to Rabbi Jochanan ben Nappeha (3rd C.):

"There are six things the fruit of which man eats in this world, while the principal remains for him in the world to come, viz ... and judging one's neighbour in the scale of merit (i.e. giving him the benefit of the doubt)."<sup>2</sup>

Tholuck,<sup>3</sup> as always, investigates the matter most thoroughly. He writes that owing to Luke's third person plural  $\delta\omega\sigma\theta\upsilon\sigma\iota\nu$  (6.38) which certainly relates to men it might be supposed that despite the preceding passives the judgement is that of men. Notwithstanding the third person plural (see v.16) along with the second person singular is used impersonally and this impersonal may when relating to God be also expressed in the plural as shown by Lk. 12.20.

6.22 might well be placed in the explicit category owing to the association between darkness and final judgement (22.23; 25.30) and, if the Cross is taken as an expression of God's judgement, 27.46 (see pp. 352ff., below). Windisch lays down

"Pericopes and logia in which the nearness of the judgement and the eschatological rule of God are not expressly articulated do not need to be referred by exegesis to the eschatological situation."<sup>4</sup>

His chief positive argument for this statement is the affinity between some passages in the Sermon and the motifs of Wisdom literature. This is so but, as McArthur observes: "... they have been put into an eschatological framework which transforms them."<sup>5</sup>

1 Strack, Herman L., and Billerbeck, Paul; Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch, (6 Vols.) Munchen, 1926, I, 443, etc.

2 b. Shab., 12a.

3 Op. cit., ad loc.

4 Op. cit., pp. 40ff.

5 Op. cit., pp. 92, 93.

McArthur adds that Windisch also:

"Neglects to mention that the most remarkable instance of transforming wisdom into eschatological teaching is to be found in the Beatitudes which are generally recognized as characteristic of Wisdom literature. Thus the eschatological character of specific sayings cannot be denied simply because they appear to be derived from Wisdom material."

To whom is the Sermon addressed? In some places it would seem to be addressed to disciples; 5.1 "...his disciples came to him"; in 5.11 it can only be disciples who are persecuted; 5.13-16 salt and light can only mean people with some dedication; 5.23 is more doubtful; a "brother" might be a brother Jew for Matthew is perhaps recording a time prior to the destruction of the temple, when the altar still exists. The altar might, on the other hand, be a figure for sacrificial worship. It is clear that until A.D.70 Christians continued to worship in the temple, e.g. Lk. 24.53; Acts 2.46; 3.1ff.; 5.20ff.; 21.26ff. It is safer perhaps to regard the word brother here as at a transitional point between O.T. and N.T. usage. Shortly after this the word became almost exclusively a Christian word meaning a fellow church member.<sup>1</sup> This matter perhaps gives the key as to the audience to whom the Sermon on the Mount was addressed, viz. primarily disciples but also the general public, as it were over the heads of the disciples or by means of their preaching.

In 7.21, it would seem that those who say "Lord, Lord," but fail to do "the will of my Father ..." are intended to hear. Then in 7.24 there is the emphatic ~~πᾶσι~~ <sup>ὅτι</sup> indicating either immediately or at some later time a wider audience than disciples.

The best solution of the problem seems to be that the Sermon is addressed primarily to disciples but also to those who hear it and are prepared to enter by the narrow gate of the first beatitude. The secondary audience are not able even properly to hear with understanding

1 It was a technical term. Though Paul could use it of fellow-Jews (Rom. 9.3) he also applied it strictly to fellow-Christians (e.g. 1Cor. 5.11).

cf. 13.13,14,15,19 (and cf. John 6.60 "this is a hard saying, who can hear it?"). The message of the Sermon is available to all though few will in fact hear and obey (7.13,14).<sup>1</sup>

We will see later that the acceptance of grace is an element which has to be included in the criteria of judgement. Therefore it is worth observing that the ethics of grace is implicit in Jesus' first public act, His submission to John's baptism, "to fulfil all righteousness", (3.16) to identify Himself with sinners in their need for repentance. This is Matthew's way of saying that God "made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin" (2Cor. 5.12). The ethics of grace come up again in the beatitudes (5.3-12), in the parables of the unforgiving debtor, (18.24-25) and the labourers in the vineyard, (20.1-16). Baptism speaks of humility, as does the first beatitude, the surrender to an act in which the baptized person is essentially passive: he is baptized, he does not baptize himself.

It is impossible to claim that Jesus asked too much; it is not possible to claim that He did away with moral imperatives. Does Matthew mean these imperatives to be obeyed by unaided human nature? This will affect our research into criteria of judgement. While the need for grace and for the Holy Spirit is not so explicit in Matthew as in Paul or even as in Luke (compare Mt. 7.11: "How much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things ..." with Luke (11.13): "... give the Holy Spirit ..."), Matthew makes it sufficiently clear that help from God is needed.<sup>2</sup>

1 For further evidence see Mt. 7.28 <sup>οἱ</sup> ὄχλοι and the Lucan setting of the Sermon on the Plain (Lk. 6.17-20) and the woes (Lk. 6.24-26), surely not addressed to disciples.

2 For example in 7.7, "ask ... <sup>αἰτετε</sup> αἰτετε, seek ... <sup>ζητετε</sup> ζητετε, knock ... <sup>κρουετε</sup> κρουετε", are all present imperatives denoting continuity, perseverance. In 19.11 <sup>δεδοται</sup> δεδοται is a divine passive. Though entry to the Kingdom of heaven by a rich man is hardly possible, "with God all things are possible." 19.26. In 28.18 all power has been given to Jesus ( <sup>εἰς παντα</sup> εἰς παντα, again the divine passive) and this is the basis and springboard of the Great Commission.

Linnemann correctly interprets the parable of the unmerciful servant (18.23-25) when she writes: "If the attitude of the wicked servant had been told without the preceding generosity of the king, it would never have evoked our protest."<sup>1</sup> Thus God's gracious forgiveness becomes the motive and inspiration for human forgiveness.

Edersheim mentions the case of a very able rabbi, R. Bun b. Chijja who died at the age of twenty-eight. His funeral oration illustrated the text of Eccles. 5.11 with a parable concerning a vineyard labourer, distinguished above the rest by his ability, who only worked for two hours out of the day but received the same wages as those who had worked all day. When the others murmured the king replied: "... this labourer has by his skill wrought as much in two hours as you in the whole day." So the funeral sermon concluded: "R. Bun plied the law more in twenty-eight years than another in a hundred years."<sup>2</sup> The rabbinic parable throws that of Matthew (20.1-16) into relief and shows how far Matthew was from the Jewish doctrine of salvation by works.

Connected with this is the question of whether the imperatives of the Sermon can be obeyed by human effort. This question has already been virtually answered in the negative. It affects the criteria of judgement inasmuch as inner attitude towards God (whether a good deed is for His glory, 5.16), besides inner motives for doing righteous acts, ("a cup of cold water because he is a disciple", 10.42) will become part of these criteria. This is so because it is plain that such attitudes are an essential part of actions judged good. It is surely no accident that the first beatitude is concerned with poverty of spirit, making it the *sine qua non* of entry to the Kingdom.

1 Eta Linnemann, Parables of Jesus, London, 1966, p.111.

2 A. Edersheim, LTJM, Vol.2, p.420f. quoting a Midrash on Eccl. 5.11; Jer-Ber. 2.8. Also quoted by R. C. Trench, Notes on The Parables of our Lord, 14th Edition, London, 1882, p.183n, from whom the final sentence comes.

A good tree cannot produce bad fruit - "cannot", not merely "does not" and conversely a bad tree. Windisch points out: "Matthew has attached this saying to the warning against false prophets. He had therefore related it exclusively to evil types and their recognition."<sup>1</sup> But he immediately adds: "In all probability he (Matthew) was content to assume that the hearers, the disciples, belonged to the type of the good tree."

It is significant that though here we have a critic who is not prepared to permit the pericope to be of wider application, yet he draws, in one respect, a general conclusion. His conclusion fits the condition that disciples were those of the right attitude, for which see below from the negative point of view, especially on 5.22,28; 6.14,15,22,23 and 25, *passim*.

The same kind of literary form, that of opposites set in juxtaposition, occurs in 7.13,14 as in 7.15-20. In the former they are clearly intended to be generalized. Therefore, one might well disagree with Windisch regarding the latter. Much of the Sermon could be rendered absurd by refusal to generalize. What if someone hits you not on the right cheek but on the right arm? - (also a backhanded blow and therefore an insult) - is one to say the command does not apply because the cheek, not the arm, was specified?

In any case Windisch, in referring to the attachment of 7.15 to the saying about false prophets, seems to ignore the other saying about the good and bad tree, peculiar to Matthew in 12.23. There, the context is the Beelzebul controversy, the unforgivable sin, and those addressed are the Pharisees whose hearts contain wicked treasure (12.35). Black<sup>2</sup> has a most helpful suggestion to make about 12.33 which confirms the emphasis Matthew places on a right attitude. He observes the parallel with 7.18 and takes the view that the translator "failed to recognize and understand

1 Op. cit., p.89.

2 AAGA, p.202f.

the Aramaic idiom." Appeal to the Aramaic would give such sense as: "... make the tree good so that its fruit will be good" or simply: "make the good tree produce good fruit." How to make the tree (= character) good is indicated by Matthew in 7.7 and implied by what ought to have taken place in 18.53ff. that is a genuine acceptance of God's forgiveness.

Jeremias makes a great contribution to the theology of Matthew when he writes:

"every word of the SM was preceded by something else ... by the preaching of the Kingdom of God ... by the granting of sonship to the disciples, Mt. 5.16; 5.45; 5.48 etc. ... by Jesus' witness to himself in word and deed ... The Gospel preceded the demand."<sup>1</sup>

Jeremias says this just after having given five examples from the Sermon.

For instance, in comparing 6.15 with 18.35 he says:

"In the latter we see especially clearly: this second demand (to forgive) was preceded by something else ... by the great debt-cancellation of which the parable speaks."

So he uses the parable to interpret the Sermon's teaching on forgiveness.

Although the basis for right ethical conduct is not as explicit in Matthew as in Paul (see Appendix C) it is nevertheless present. Part of the assessment of reward and therefore part of the criteria of judgement must be whether a man has admitted his need. God, like the vineyard owner in 20.1-16 rewards and judges graciously according to

1 J. Jeremias, The Sermon on the Mount, London, 1961, p.25ff.

See also T. W. Manson, The Teaching of Jesus, Cambridge, 1951, where a similar idea is expounded. Jesus' own fasting, in solitude (4.2) though he gave the opposite impression (11.19) and his exhortation to fast (6.18), his prayer in private (14.23) and his command in 6.6 provide still more examples.

admitted need, expressed here as "no man has hired us" and in general as poverty of spirit (5.3), rendered by the N.E.B., with understanding of the O.T. background of the phrase, "those who know their need of God."<sup>1</sup>

- 1 See Pss. 12.5; 34.6; 86.1 for the concept of the acceptability of the poor man before God; many scholars affirm that the writers were not financially poor. In 1 Kings 10.5, the Queen of Sheba, seeing the God-given wisdom and the splendour of Solomon, had "no more spirit in her". At this point, some say she became a proselyte. Is. 66.2 is the best evidence of the idea of poverty rendered explicitly in spiritual terms: "... this is the man to whom I (God) will look, he that is humble (shphl elsewhere translated "poor") and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word."

See also José P. Miranda Marx and The Bible, New York, 1974, passim and for instance, p.116:

"Yahweh is the Saviour of all the exploited and oppressed ... (Ps. 98.6) 'Yahweh answers me because I am poor and needy'. If, as some believe, the author of this verse was not really poor, it is all the more significant that he needs to present himself as poor for Yahweh to hear him". While we must sympathize with Miranda writing in a milieu of economic exploitation and while we must acknowledge that the primary meaning of poor and needy is financially poor and in need of basic necessities, this is not to say that the phrase carries no deeper meaning. While scholars in Western countries, comfortably placed financially, may have tended to over-stress the spiritual aspect of being poor and needy or even to have excluded the material aspect altogether, this does not mean that we should compensate by swinging to the opposite extreme as does Miranda. To be "really poor" for Miranda means only one thing. This opinion is a salutary corrective, but it is prejudiced.



SALT 5.13b

Some commentators, e.g. Bonnard, see in the savourless salt an absence of good works.

Bonnard's interpretation springs from an idea emphasized elsewhere in Matthew (e.g. 25.24,41ff.) He writes:

"Le texte original, encore apparent dans le par. de Mc., insistait sur le trésor (de la Parole, du Royaume, de la foi etc.) confié aux disciples, trésor qui, en lui-même, ne peut s'affadir, mais qui peut être perdu, négligé, ou utilisé pour les seuls besoins égoïstes de l'Eglise et, par là, refusé au monde: l'image du sel affadi serait alors improprement reportée du sel lui-même sur ceux qui en ont la responsabilité pour la terre; de telles incohérences sont fréquentes dans les images bibliques."

Then he adds: "les disciples ne sont le sel de la terre que par les oeuvres, (v.16b)..."<sup>1</sup>

So, having connected salt with the word, the Kingdom and the faith, he concludes by claiming that disciples are the salt of the earth solely through their works. What is consistent with much else in Matthew is the idea of the church selfishly keeping the treasure to itself, but Matthew does not say that the salt was not spread around, but that it lost its savour. Bonnard takes refuge in the claim that biblical images are incoherent, but this is no reason for compounding the incoherence, as he seems to be doing.

Bonnard's reference to v.16b. makes a close parallel between salt and light, a synonymous parallel. This would be Hebraic, as Matthew often was, but it does not follow that Matthew must have used the above form of Hebrew poetry in this instance; Hebrew parallels are often partly antithetical and less often wholly antithetical. It is therefore not necessary to make the parallel between v.13 and v.14-16 correspond as closely in meaning as Bonnard would wish, though it can hardly be denied that a parallel is intended - 'earth'; 'world': 'good for nothing', hidden light.<sup>2</sup> But

1 Op. cit., ad loc.

2 Abrahams notes (op.cit. 2, p.183) that a Talmudic saying corresponds exactly with Matthew's version of the salt logion. This confirms Matthew's Jewishness.

there are also plain differences between salt and light which preclude an exact synonymous parallelism.

Salt acts from within; light, from without. Good works can be seen and so correspond to light. Salt cannot be seen whilst it is engaged in imparting taste. Even in its function of preservation it acts by penetration. Therefore it is more likely to correspond to something inward, devotion to God, faith, knowledge of Christ (2 Cor. 2.14). Salt is a sign of the covenant in the O.T. (Lev. 2.13), required in all sacrifices even in Ezekiel's temple (Ezek. 43.24). An everlasting covenant is called a covenant of salt (Num. 18.19). Might not salt therefore mean in N.T. times knowledge of the teaching of Jesus? Yet, the teaching of Jesus cannot be divorced from obedience to it (7.21ff. 21.28ff.) "How is the earth to be made acceptable to God, preserved from corruption but by the intercession and sacrifice (so Fenton)<sup>1</sup> of those who are devoted to him?" Might not the saltiness of salt be more akin to the first beatitude or the sixth than to good works in themselves? Suzanne de Diétrich affirms without doubt that "salt is the faith of believers, bearers of the Covenant of God, witnesses to his mercy".<sup>2</sup> In view of the O.T. background this seems a likely interpretation.

Cranfield provides another example of those scholars who are against understanding salt as exclusively good works, though the Gospel according to Matthew certainly includes the demand for them. Cranfield suggests:

"It seems likely that the saltiness of salt stands for that for which the disciples are to be prepared to risk their lives (Mk. 8.35) and of which they are not to be ashamed (Mk. 8.38) i.e. the Gospel, Jesus' words, Jesus himself."<sup>3</sup>

These words on salt in Mark are equally apposite to salt in Matthew for in Matthew there are sayings about persecution for righteousness sake and for Jesus' sake immediately preceding 5.13 (i.e. 5.10-12).

1 J.C. Fenton, Saint Matthew, London, 1963, ad loc.

2 Saint Matthew, London, 1975, ad loc.

3 C.E.B. Cranfield, op. cit., p. 316.

The best solution may be that salt is in fact all these things, intercession, devotion, sacrifice, the message, the Kingdom, the faith and good works. Really good fruit can only come from a good tree (7.16-20). So it is impossible to isolate good works from their source as it is impossible to separate a tree from its roots. In 16b. the object is to "glorify your Father", so the good works must be known to spring from devotion etc., that is they must be recognizably divine, not mere humanist "good works". The criterion of judgement in 13b. then is the lack of these things mentioned by Bonnard, de Diétrich, Fenton and Cranfield.

Among the rabbis salt denotes that savour of human actions which makes them well pleasing to God, e.g. "to salt his riches with the salt of alms".<sup>1</sup> This citation might indicate a bridge between salt and light. The good works would have to be done with the right motive in order that men might glorify the Father, and not to exalt the doers of the works. If salt includes faith, intercession and devotion to God, then this would ensure the right motive for the good works of 16b.

Loss of savour however paradoxical corresponds then to loss of faith, lack of prayers and the absence of good works. Exposure to the elements can in fact lead impure salt to lose its saltiness.<sup>2</sup> Exposure to the

1 Lexicon Chaldaicum, Talmudicum et Rabbinicum, ed. Johannes Buxtorf, the Elder, Lipsiae, 18[69] 75, p.1213.

2 Some kinds of salt do lose their savour. W.M. Thomson quotes Mamdrell as having witnessed salt at the South end of the Dead Sea which had lost its savour entirely. This must have been rock salt left out in the open for a considerable period, for on the other hand Deatrick notes the belief of modern shepherds that "salt from the sea" does not lose its saltiness as "salt from the earth". This, says Deatrick, is due to the fact that salt from the sea is never great in quantity, is not left out to weather and is protected from wind-blown gypsum dust which masks the taste of salt. But Thomson gives an example of apparent loss of savour on a much bigger scale: sixty-five housefuls of the salt in contact with the floor hoarded in the village of June lost its savour. The floors were of earth and presumably damp seeped up into the salt and dissolved some of it. It would then leach out leaving behind the impurities which were mixed with the salt when it was first placed there.

See W.M. Thomson, The Land and the Book, London, Edinburgh, Dublin & New York, 1913, p.367 and Eugene P. Deatrick, "Salt, Soil, Savior", The Biblical Archaeologist Vol. XXV, 1962, p.245.

The evidence from the Dead Sea supports Davies' view that in 5.13b. Matthew is indeed casting a side glance at the Dead Sea Sect. See SSM p.250.

influence of the world without due time to nurture faith by prayer (7,7-11) and learning (11.25ff.) can lead the professing Christian to lose all that supposedly made him a Christian, even though he may appear worthy as does savourless salt before its saltlessness is detected. The verb "cast out" found also in 8.12; 22.13; 25.30 is associated with the extremely bitter and final experience of outer darkness.

Again and again we find the passive indicating God's action, though in this particular case it is possible that the same men who do the treading under also do the casting out. It is more likely, however, that men are merely the agents of God in both activities, including "it is cast out", *βληθὲν* "Good for nothing, ... cast out, ... trodden under foot" seem to mean final judgement but McArthur does not place 5.13 in his column "explicit eschatology".<sup>1</sup> We must therefore disagree with him on this matter.

Bonnard's charge of incoherence is valid in as much as the idea of salt in its pure form losing its savour is incoherent, because it is impossible. It can be dissolved, it can leach out but it cannot in itself lose its savour. Its taste can only be marred by impurities. R. Joshua ben Chananiah saw this for in reply to the question: "What can cause salt to lose its savour?" he replied: "The afterbirth of a mule". It is retorted that the mule which is barren cannot have an afterbirth, to which his answer is "Neither can the salt become savourless."<sup>2</sup>

We pass now to a comparison between Matthew, Mark and Luke. It is hard to say why Matthew omitted Mk. 9.49, "...everyone will be salted with fire" except that he wanted to emphasize something else in his version of the salt logion. Also he had dealt with the theme of Mk. 9.49 in his last two beatitudes i.e. the suffering of disciples in the fire of persecution. Mark wanted the saying as it fitted in so well with his

1 Op. cit., p.47.

2 Billerbeck, 1.236.

context, that of asceticism and renunciation (Mk. 9.43-48). One might say 'a voluntary undergoing of fire'. Matthew has placed this after his saying on adultery in 5.27,28 i.e. at 5.29,30. Matthew also omitted the phrase "salt is good" (Mk. 9.50a). This was probably because it was obvious in his context. He also omitted: "Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another" (Mk. 9.50) again probably because he had another purpose. What was this other purpose? The clue is in the verb "has lost taste" ( *μωρανθῇ* ) which Matthew and Luke have in contrast to Mark's *ἀναλὸν γένηται*. A lesser clue lies in the change of the next verb "restored", *ἀλυσθήσεται* instead of *ἀρτυθήσεται*. (Lk. 14.34) or *ἀρτυσέτε* (Mk. 9.50). J. Lightfoot was the first to see that the ambiguity in the first verb lay in the root *tpl* = 1. Be saltless; 2. foolish.<sup>1</sup> Jeremias says "*μωρανθῇ*" is a translation error but the translation could be deliberate to underline the idea of rebellion against God, or of obstinate folly which may be included in the meaning of the cognate word *μωρός*.<sup>2</sup> Matthew may well have wished to convey much more than the insipidity and tastelessness of Mark's rendering. What motive could he have had but the desire to introduce the note of stern judgement (cf. 5.22 where *μωρός* is the climactic word and final judgement the theme).

Why should Matthew have made the alteration in the second verb? I suggest that he wanted to stick strictly to the theme of saltiness. He was interested in much more than seasoning but in all the attributes of salt, tang, zest, flavour, preservative, asepticity, incorruptibility, permanence, symbol of the covenant and of its enduring nature (Num. 18.19; 2 Chron. 13.5). The Sefer ha-Chinuch suggests that it reminds the worshipper of the immortality of his soul, the purity of which he must constantly guard.<sup>3</sup>

1 Lightfoot, *Opera Omnia*, (2 Vols.) Rotterdam, 1686, II, 540b. on Lk.14.34.

2 Joachim Jeremias (*New Testament Theology* trans. John Bowden, London, 1971, Vol.1, p.28.

3 Quoted by Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, Chicago; London; Toronto, 1957 (Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich) p.533(3).

Salt was a distinguishing feature of true worship. Maimonides quotes:

"The idolaters did not offer any other bread but leavened and chose sweet things for their sacrifices, which they seasoned with honey ...; but salt is not mentioned in any of their sacrifices. Our law therefore forbade us to offer leaven or honey, and commanded us to have salt in every offering" (Moreh Nebuchim 111.46)."<sup>1</sup>

Luke's verb is also passive in contrast to Mark's which is active. This may indicate a better understanding on the part of Matthew and Luke of the lack of possibility of saltiness being restored by human effort.

Why did Matthew not include Luke's words: "... it is fit neither for the land nor for the dunghill"? An interesting possibility is that it was because Matthew lived by the sea where the sea breezes carried enough salt on to the land. Deatrick argues that "salt for the earth", an objective genitive (cf. N.E.B.), is the correct rendering. Salt he rightly claims is, in small quantities, a useful fertilizer. This is a fact of which T. W. Manson<sup>2</sup> appears to be ignorant for he challenges the word "land" believing it to be a mistranslation of the Aramaic for "seasoning". He thought that land and dunghill were equivalent to rubbish heap and salt had no fertilizing properties. A dunghill is in fact a place for storing useful waste till it can be spread on the land. J. C. Morton wrote:

"Salt is applicable in all cases in which fermented dung cannot be carted at once to the land. Covering the heap with salt will be found a cheap and effective means of checking fermentation."<sup>3</sup>

1 "Commentary" 119. Op. cit., Vol. 1, p.74.

2 Sayings, p. 132.

3 A Cyclopedia of Agriculture, New York, 1885, Vol. 2. p.

As to the use of salt as fertilizer Deatrick cites several authorities.<sup>1</sup>

A large quantity of salt has a sterilizing effect as we may gather from Deut. 29.23; Judges 9.45; Job 39.6; Jer. 17.6; Zeph. 2.9.<sup>2</sup>

Deatrick<sup>3</sup> quotes evidence to the effect that savourless salt is used to spread on rooftops in modern Israel, where it hardens the soil on the flat roofs and stops leakage. As rooftops are the sites for public gatherings and playgrounds the salt is trodden underfoot by men. This could be significant for the time of Matthew though it is equally likely that this salt was simply thrown in the public paths and roads.

Deatrick's most valuable contribution arises from his finding that salt in small quantities is a growth stimulant for plants. He rightly states that: "Jesus was not interested merely in the preservation of his way of life but much more in its continued stimulation to ever greater growth."<sup>4</sup> For this Mt. 28.18-20 alone is adequate support. So while not forgetting the other probabilities for the meaning of salt, it must be added that salt, in correct quantities, is seminal. Failure to pass on the message would then be a criterion by which professing Christians are to be judged. If this is accepted, it would make an implicit parallel with 16b.

1 Op. cit., p.45.

J. M. Wilson, The Rural Cyclopaedia, Vol. IV, 1852, p.130.

J. L. Lyon and H.O. Buckman, The Nature and Properties of Soils, 1927, p.380.

C. L. Eskew, Salt the Fifth Element, 1948, p.217.

Of these the most striking is the quotation of Horace Greeley by Eskew. Greeley enthused: "If five bushels of salt be applied to a field and it does not thereupon yield five bushels more per acre of corn I will eat the field." In practice this statement generates heat but inadequate light. Greeley omitted to note the size of the field. However, taking it to be as small as 20 acres the amount of salt is relatively minute.

2 The sterilizing property is described in an article by F. Charles Fensham in the same number of The Biblical Archaeologist as above quoted pp. 48-50. Fensham notes, besides, an interesting Hittite inscription to the same effect.

3 Op. cit., p.47.

4 Ibid, p.47f.

### Additional Note on Salt

Col. 4.6, "Let your speech be with grace, seasoned with salt" is a text that might throw light on the salt which lost its savour. Many commentators see grace as charm (as a classical Greek) and salt as Attic salt meaning wit. Though we must be cautious about attributing to Paul the classical sense of the Greek word and though statistically it is more likely that he used grace in the usual N.T. sense, it is possible that he used it here in a secondary sense. The primary sense would be grace as the grace of God and if we maintain an ardent parallelism, the seasoning of speech, speech that arises out of communion with God. This would represent a Jewish background i.e. one which related to the free grace of the covenant. The Hellenistic sense would be as above, grace = charm, salt = wit. Paul is not averse to quoting a heathen poet when it suits his argument (Acts 17.26) so to accept the secondary meanings would not be an unique Hellenization of Paul.

James Moffatt would appear to have agreed with the primary interpretation for he translated: "let your talk always have a saving salt of grace about it." If he had adopted the secondary interpretation he could well have rendered it "let your talk always be witty", or "winsome".

However, in His Grace in the New Testament, London, 1931, p.294, James Moffatt says: "The Apostle is playing on the double meaning of Your speech should not be insipid nor devoid of religious power - salt being that which preserves from corruption. This was implicit in the Pauline idea of ἁλῆς".

The contrary view of Col. 4.6 is sometimes supported by reference to Plutarch, de Garrulitate, 23, p. 514f, but it is about seasoning life with words, as one seasons food with salt. It says nothing about wit, see C.F.D. Moule, The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians and Philemon, First Edition Cambridge, 1957, p.135.

Derrett has a valuable contribution on the well-known medical properties of salt and how they apply to spiritual healing: "... a community whose members must spiritually amputate themselves (here he is inconsistent with what he had tried to hint, that amputation could be literal) to avoid non Christian sexual relationships, for example, must have the affection and support of their friends to sustain them and prevent them bleeding to death, or their being eaten by the worms of madness ... The community ... must retain the power to heal ...

The salt which preserves actually amputated persons from superficial sepsis, and helps to avoid worms, will preserve them (in a metaphorical amputation) for the life to come ..." (on Mk. 9.48-50, "Law in the New Testament, New Testament Studies, London, 1971, p.28f.)



5.20

We need to consider 5.17-20 in order to bring out the force of 5.20, the only verse that concerns final judgement.

Vv. 18,19, according to A. M. Hunter:

"can hardly be the words of Christ for (a) the doctrine of the law's permanence is pure rabbinism; (b) Jesus Himself relaxed the Sabbath law, annulled the law about (ritual) purity and rejected Moses' commandment about divorce".<sup>1</sup>

One possible answer to this is that Jesus' thinking may have developed during his ministry. This development may have been paralleled by Matthew during the course of writing his Gospel and interpreting his source. While it is not our concern to deal with Jesus' teaching but with that of Matthew, nor is it even to discuss wherein they may be disentangled, Hunter's statement provides a useful starting point from which to consider Matthew's interpretation. J. L. Houlden gives another possible answer to both Hunter's points. Instancing the story of the disciples in the cornfield (Mk. 2.23-24, Mt. 12.1-8), as an example of Matthew's ethical interest, he writes:

"Mark reaches a theological conclusion about man's position in relation to the sabbath as an institution, whereby he is its master ..., whereas Matthew by omitting 2.27, ("the sabbath was made for man not man for the sabbath"), and amplifying and tightening the argument from the Scriptures turns it into a justification of a dispensation being granted by Jesus, who as Son of man has the authority required for the case. The general law of the sabbath is not impugned. Jesus' authority is asserted yet, for good measure he justifies his ruling as from Scriptural grounds, for his mission is not to abolish but to fulfil the law (5.17)."<sup>2</sup>

To this we might add that Jesus did not abrogate the sabbath law, but simply pointed to a higher law exemplified by what David did, putting human need first, and appealed to a loftier demand enshrined in Hosea (6.6). In doing this he was doing something similar to what Paul did when he maintained that the promise was superior to the law antedating it by 430 years (Gal.3.17).

1 Design for Life, London, 1953, p.47.

2 Ethics and the New Testament, London and Oxford, 1973, p.50.

In the punishment of Cain for his lack of mercy and the replacement of Abel by Seth to comfort Adam and Eve the law of mercy may be said to go back to the creation.

Matthew does not picture Jesus as annulling the law about ritual purity. He did not say "do not cleanse the outside of the cup" but that it was hypocritical to do so and leave the inside filthy. True, he rejected Moses' divorce law but only by appealing to a basic principle of Scripture reaching back to the creation of male and female. An absolute principle of God must take precedence over a conditional law. The latter may not even have been included in Matthew's definition of law. Besides, an alternative translation of *ἕως ἃν πάντα γένηται* (v.18) in the N.E.B. reads "until all that it stands for is achieved". The time, the conclusion of Jesus' ministry including the Cross and Resurrection, might almost have arrived. For Matthew, as for Paul, Christ could have been "the end of the law". It is time to jettison elaborations, escape clauses, modifications and additions to the basic O.T. moral Law. As "'heaven and earth will pass away; but my words will not pass away' means that Jesus is claiming for his own teaching the same validity as is elsewhere claimed for the canonical Scriptures," this confirms that Jesus will have achieved all that the law stands for at the conclusion of his ministry.

Matthew makes it plain that his is not a mere legal ethic (6.12a; 18.27; 20.1-16; 26.28). He evidently intends us to view the law reinterpreted as a motive for seeking forgiveness for its own failure to fulfil it, as implied in 7.11a "... you, then, being evil ..." As R. Bultmann wrote to Windisch: "... in the light of Matthew 5.21-28 we must all make the confession that is in Rom. 2.12."<sup>2</sup>

"The Lucan parallel to Mt. 5.18, Lk.16.17" tellingly suggests T. W. Manson, "is an ironic comment on the unbending conservatism of the scribes."<sup>3</sup>

1 Manson, The Teaching of Jesus, p.291.

2 Op. cit., p.117 (i.e. Windisch quoting Bultmann).

3 Sayings, p.135.

Certainly there is a sarcasm in it, which forces us to agree with Manson. "It is easier for heaven (God's throne!) to pass away than for a dot or comma of the law to pass away." (The bracketed words are mine, derived from Mt. 5.34).

P. Bonnard, having quoted E. Schweizer in similar vein, rejoins: "il est plus simple d'y voir une manière juive typiquement rabbinique de souligner l'autorité absolue et permanente de la loi, mais d'une loi réinterprétée par Jesus."<sup>1</sup> If we follow Bonnard, we may conclude that the doing and teaching of the law reinterpreted by Jesus form the exceeding righteousness which is illustrated in the antitheses that follow. Lack of it brings final judgement, exclusion from the Kingdom of heaven. The righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees was defective in that it had an improper set of priorities (see on chapters 12 and 23); it was based not on the Law alone but on the oral law and scribal traditions. The righteousness implicitly condemned was evasive (15.5ff.; 23.4,25).<sup>2</sup> external<sup>3</sup> (15.8; 23.5-7,27,29) and exclusive (23.13). There were notable exceptions to these, for instance, R. Eleazar said the good way that a man should cleave to was "a good heart". R. Jochanan ben Zakkai approved of this more than the answers of his other pupils.<sup>4</sup> This Rabbi at any rate knew the inner disposition to be the important thing rather than externals.

1 Op. cit., ad loc.

2 Some examples are given by Emil Schürer, The Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ, Edinburgh, 1896, Div. II, Vol. II, pp. 98, 120, 121, e.g. among the ways of evading the sabbath was: "... a pail might be tied over a well with a girdle, but not with a rope", etc.

3 The broadening of phylacteries is sometimes mentioned only by Matthew among the evangelists (23.5). The Mekilta (1.15 Off. has much to say but its attitude is much more liberal than that of the scribes and Pharisees mentioned by Matthew. It lays down: "one who studies the Torah is not obligated to put on phylacteries." (p.154) In the case of minors, only one: "...who knows how to take care of them" may have them made for himself. Women and slaves need not wear them (p.153). The Mekilta here probably reflects Hillelite thinking and this point is an indication that Oesterley is probably correct when he writes: "The impression is almost irresistible that the denunciations (most numerous in Matthew) of the Pharisees occurring in the Gospels were directed primarily against a Shammaite section". Sayings of the Jewish Fathers, p. xvii.

4 Ab. 2.12, dated by Oesterley op. cit., p.20n.10 to the last quarter of the first century A.D.

Even the O.T. law was not obeyed by the scribes and Pharisees though they taught it (23.3).

Matthew's Jesus took a prophetic rather than legal attitude to the Law as is specially clear in 12.1-14 and 19.1-9. In contrast to him and in elucidating the legalists' lack of the exceeding righteousness we quote from Schürer and Schweizer.

Schürer observes on the results of zeal for the law; "... an incredible externalizing of the religious and moral life", the whole of which was "drawn into the sphere of law".<sup>1</sup> Consequently:

- (1) "... the individual life was thus regulated by a norm, whose application to this sphere at all is an evil," because "freedom is the essence of moral action."
- (2) "The application of the legal norm ... involves placing the most varying avocations of life upon a level, as though of equal value."

A good example of this is noted by Manson. Judah ha-Nasi (140-219 or 220 A.D.)<sup>2</sup> said: "Be attentive to a legal precept as to a grave, for thou knowest not the assigned reward of precepts."<sup>3</sup>

- (3) "All in reality depends on the satisfaction of the letter" (of the law).
- (4) "Moral duty is split up into an endless atomistic multitude of separate duties and obligations ... "All depends not on the inward motive but on the external correctness of an act."

Schweizer affirms in a section on legalism:

- (1) "... any obedience which simply follows the letter of the law is less than full obedience, because one can at times fulfil the letter of the law without his heart being in it ... or even ... when he would really like to do the opposite."
- (2) "... legalistic obedience leads to the keeping of accounts because one depends upon his own merit in addition to the gift of God."<sup>4</sup>

1 Emil Schürer, op. cit., Div. II, Vol. II, pp. 93-96.

2 Date given by Oesterley, op. cit., p.15n.1.

3 T. W. Manson, The Teaching of Jesus, quoting Ab. 2.1, p.303n.4.

4 Edward Schweizer The Good News according to Mark, London, 1971, p.76.

Lack of the righteousness which exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees is a criterion of judgement because it entails exclusion from the Kingdom of heaven.

The exceeding righteousness is illustrated in 5.21-48 and 6.1-18 particularly. So we pass to the parts of those passages which bear upon the criteria of final judgement.

Additional Note on 5.18

We cannot afford to ignore Manson's interpretation (Sayings, p.135). He describes Lk. 16.17, the Lucan parallel, as "bitter irony". Mt. 5.18 he says is possibly a revision of it. Tittle he points out "most probably stands for certain scribal ornaments added to certain letters in the Hebrew Scriptures (Billerbeck, 1.248f.). These were no part of the law itself but an addition to it. The fact that they were placed on the tops of letters and another name for them was 'crowns', may have some bearing on the use of the word 'fall' in Luke.

This may well be true of Luke but the interpretation, if applied to Matthew probably founders on the word 'fulfilled'. Matthew elsewhere always applies this word to the first advent of Jesus and not to the end of the Messianic age up till when at least the Jews believed the Law to remain in force (see Moore, Judaism, 1.269ff.).

Joachim Jeremias (N. T. Theol. Vol.1, p.211) writes: "In the present context between 5.17 and 5.19 ... the logion suggests that in an ultra-conservative way Jesus recognized the Torah to the last comma. In view of the missionary situation of Jewish Christianity it is all too understandable that Jesus' sayings should have been robbed of their point in this way," cf. Manson's remarks on Lk. 16.17, in the Jewish Christian sphere.

Additional Note on 5.20

Jeremias would like to distinguish between the righteousness of the scribes and that of the Pharisees:

"...the scribes are the theological teachers who have had some years of education, the Pharisees, on the other hand, are not theologians, but rather groups of pious laymen from every part of the community, traders, craftsmen, professional men; only their leaders were theologians ... Matthew 5.20 speaks of three kinds of righteousness and this corresponds exactly to the construction of the Sermon on the Mount: (1) the controversy between Jesus and the theologians 5.21-48; (2) his controversy with the righteousness of the Pharisees 6.1-18; (3) 6.19-7.27 develops the new righteousness of the disciples of Jesus." Joachim Jeremias, The Sermon on the Mount, London, 1961, p.23.

This suggestion is attractive. The first is just the sort of passage that would arise from a clash between an original thinker and the contenders for tradition, so here Jeremias' idea is cogent. The dividing point between (2) and (3) is not, however, so convincing; indeed it seems arbitrary. Though deeds of mercy, prayer and fasting (6.1-18) were the main traditional practices of Pharisees, 6.19-34 is first about the use of money and then about the avoidance of anxiety which is all connected with 6.1-4. Censoriousness (7.1-4) was a sin to which pious Pharisees as well as learned scribes were prone. It is doubtful if the divisions can be drawn as neatly as Jeremias draws them, though less sharp distinctions may be generally valid.

When scribes and Pharisees are mentioned together, Goulder, op. cit. passim, but esp. p.421, is inclined to view them as Pharisaic scribes. This would not obliterate the distinction which Jeremias makes, though it would soften it. Bowker writes: "... it would be impossible (from the point of view of historical reference) to find scribes and Pharisees associated together in an undifferentiated way." (John Bowker, Jesus and the Pharisees, Cambridge, 1973, p.40.)

Coming as this does from an outstanding scholar who has made a special study of the subject we must see it as weighty support for Jeremias' general attempt to draw distinctions.

Matthew's first example of Jesus' fulfilment of the law and of the exceeding righteousness which he commands is the extension of the sixth commandment to cover anger, insult and final outright condemnation of a brother (i.e. fellow believer). According to Tholuck<sup>1</sup> the rabbis recorded three levels of human court: (1) In places of less than 120 inhabitants, a court of three members without power to decide upon capital offences but only on questions of money (Sanh. 1.1); (2) in places of more than 120 inhabitants, a court of twenty-three competent to try for capital offences (Sanh. 1.4) but their decision had to be confirmed by the Sanhedrin; (3) the Sanhedrin (= Council) of seventy-two members which decided all matters of high consequence (Sanh. 1.6) (though under Roman rule it could probably no longer legally inflict the death penalty). Thus the starting point must be the second court as the first could not deal with murder and the same word, *κρίσις*, is used in connection with it. The transition from court 2 to 3 is smooth and true to procedure. The transition to death by fire in Gehenna seems a much bigger one, as Gehenna represents the final judgement of God. From the time of King Josiah who defiled the valley of Hinnom with dead bodies, the spot served permanently for the deposit of corpses which were to decay or burn unburied (Jer. 7.32,33). In line with the serious approach to Gehenna elsewhere in Matthew we may take the last punishment literally. To cast a body into the valley of Hinnom was a human act but it also signified a divine act. Therefore it is not so big a step as might be thought from the Council to Gehenna, for death by fire is simply the worst penalty<sup>2</sup> which the Council could inflict. We cannot take the first two judgements figuratively and the last literally without being inconsistent. So it is best to take all three literally despite Schweizer's objection about shortage of courts. This objection has already been answered on p.44f.

1 Op. cit., ad loc.

2 Sanh. 7.1,2 (Danby, p.393).



In any case, it seems as if the main point lies in the ascending scale. Figurative and literal truth can sometimes go together as in 5.29,30 - to cut off various organs being figurative; hell, literal. Or Matthew could mean here that anger will gain the divine equivalent of the lower court; Raka, the divine equivalent of the national court; Gehenna as we have just seen is itself virtually a figure because of its derivation. This is probably the best solution as it is both consistent and takes hell seriously.

We see then: anger as subject to the least severe judgement; the making of insulting exclamations as subject to more severe judgement; the pronouncement of moral condemnation as subject to the most severe judgement. Anger is unqualified in the best textual authorities. "Raka" is a form of insult which expresses contempt for a brother's bodily appearance or mental capacity, "numsküll", or simply, "Ugh!". "You fool", means a morally defective person, it means to consign the man so described to hell. He is literally a "damned fool". The speaker is attempting to play the part of God. (cf. 7.1-4). That a fool worthy of damnation is meant is evident from the contexts of Mt. 7.26; 25.2,3,8 where those who are called foolish are destined for final destruction, in both cases owing to careless or wilful neglect. Manson defines the word as: 'stubborn', 'rebellious', 'obstinately wicked'.<sup>1</sup> "Fool" in the Bible, writes Moore, "has a moral implication".<sup>2</sup> Strack-Billerbeck on Mt. 5.22 (1.279f.) give evidence to this effect. In Mt. 23.17 the word keeps the bad company of blind, blind in the sense of clinging to irrational false priorities. Paul employs the word in a different sense in 1 Cor. 1.25,27; 3.18; 4.10 and the cognate likewise in 1 Cor. 1.18,21,23; 2.14; 3.19 - God at any rate could not be described as having moral turpitude. But in 2 Tim. 2.23; Tit. 3.9 it comes closer to Matthew's meaning, senseless.

1 Sayings, p.156.

2 Op. cit., 2, 148n.4.

Arndt and Gingrich give three possibilities for μωρός in Mt. 5.22: (1) "a transliteration of מורד rebel"; (2) "simply the Greek translation of ῥακά "; (3) "a simple exclamation with humorous colouring"<sup>1</sup>. The second would suit Jeremias' understanding well. He claims that there is: "no heightening of the protases" tracing μωρός to the Aramaic satey = idiot", equivalent, he affirms, to raka, numskull. From Matthew's other uses of μωρός it would seem that the first of Arndt and Gingrich's alternatives is the nearest. Bonnard agrees with this and with Manson when he cites O.T. references and writes: "Insensé' (μωρε'): ce terme assez anodin en lui-même, semble avoir pris un sens beaucoup plus grave sur les lèvres juives (cf. 1 Cor. 4.10; 1.27; cf. Deut. 32.6; 21.18,20 transcription possible de מורד<sup>2</sup> = rebelle)." Jeremias is evidently trying to show that there is no graded punishment in Matthew and that may be why he finds it convenient to go back to a dubious Aramaic original.

Despite his warning about μωρός Jesus himself so described the scribes and Pharisees (23.17 and, in Luke, disciples also, Lk. 24.25), but he was uniquely entitled to do so. It is significant that Paul did not use the word in Gal. 3.13. Though he came close to the sense of it in Gal. 1.8; Acts 23.3, he used curse and threat not out of personal spleen nor according to human judgement but according to the principles of the Gospel.

McNeile's interpretation is ingenious. He paraphrases: "The Rabbis say that murder is liable to judgement, but I say that anger, its equivalent, is liable to (divine) judgement and (the Rabbis say that) abusive language such as raka is punishable by the local court (this gains partial support from Baba Mezi'a 58b, quoted below) but I say that abusive language such as more, its equivalent, is punishable by the fire

1 Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich, p. 533(3).

2 This is misspelt in Bonnard's text.

of Gehenna."<sup>1</sup> So he takes raka and mōre to be synonymous. But he has just observed on the previous page that: "the word (raka) is probably the Aramaic רָקָא ... empty, cf. Jas. 2.20." This does not seem nearly so strong as mōre for McNeile himself draws attention to the verbal form of it in Rom. 1.32 where the Gentiles' rejection of the unmistakeable glory of God in the things he has made involves folly, is without excuse and amounts to moral turpitude of the most perverse kind. He also mentions 1 Cor. 1.22 where again the context indicates folly of the kind which leads to perdition - that is a haughty disregard for the preaching of the Cross. Jas. 2.20, "... κτενέ ..." is however, apposite, if it could be shown that it is equivalent to raka. But McNeile has missed the reference to raka in the Mekilta (noted above p. 32) and this, since it is so rare a word, militates against his view. We have already seen that Matthew's other uses of mōros imply the most grave moral and spiritual failure, for it leads to exclusion from the Kingdom. It therefore seems that raka and mōre are not likely to be synonymous. Raka is a hapax legomenon, but one might suppose it could have occurred in 23 and 25 had Matthew reckoned it to have the same meaning as mōre.

Manson notes that: "A saying attributed to R. Eliezer (c. A.D.90) runs: 'He who hates his neighbour, lo he belongs to the shedders of blood.'"<sup>2</sup> This confirms the understanding of the first part of Mt. 5.22 to be concerned with inner attitude and that if hatred is as bad as murder so may anger be (cf. 1 John 3.15). If Matthew were in accord with it as may well be the case especially in the light of 5.28, the force of the idea of graded sins and punishments in 5.22 is diminished, at any rate if the death penalty due to murder was equivalent to final judgement and so to Gehenna.<sup>3</sup> So in effect the punishment for anger could be the same as that for saying 'mōre'. However this does not overcome the difficulty of equating raka and mōre.

1 A. H. McNeile, op. cit., p.62.

2 Op. cit., p.155.

3 See additional note below, p.87.

Bultmann<sup>1</sup> objects to the ascending scale of severity of judgement, "judgement" = local court, "council" = national Sanhedrin, "the hell of fire" (Gehenna) = divine judgement. He claims that it contradicts the concern over inwardness in the whole context. Anger, he feels, is as bad as abusive language. This is not easy to answer as inner attitude is a major element in the context especially in 5.3-6,8,28; 6.1-6,14-18,22ff. However, outward action is to the fore in 5.24f.; 33, 39ff.; 7.16ff. To widen the field it is works that are vital in 16.27 and 25.14-46 and words that are crucial in 12.32,36,37. In 12.32 it is not thinking or planning blasphemy against the Holy Spirit but actually speaking it that is the unpardonable sin. In 12.36,37 words are the criteria of final judgement. This is so, because they overflow from a full heart (12.34) so that the inner attitude cannot be divorced from words or in 15.18 from deeds either.

Anger therefore in 5.22 may not be so bad as anger or scorn that is expressed in words. Anger in itself is not necessarily comparable with adultery in the heart (5.28) because the latter means that an outward act is intended. The anger of 5.22 need not be so strong or uncontrolled that it bursts out into angry words or furious deeds. The venting of anger is more likely to be done in public and the inhibitions against venting it are to that extent stronger. To indulge an adulterous design would, except in some cases of temple prostitution, which could hardly apply to a professing Jew or Christian, almost always be in private. The desire might be permanently prevented from expression in the act by lack of opportunity.

Jeremias opines that raka and mōre are both "harmless insults" but we object to these equations and to the word harmless. If they were harmless then why the threat of punishment? Jeremias goes on to observe:

1 Rudolf Bultmann, The History of the Synoptic Tradition, Second Edition, trans. John Marsh, Oxford, 1968, pp. 134-6.

"ὁ ὀργισμένος" may equally mean an expression of anger in an insult".<sup>1</sup> We might accept the possibility that anger is intended to include some verbal expression but not that it might equally do so with words which explicitly do so. Jeremias does not state his grounds for this remark. They could be psychological or they could be scriptural, cf. Jas. 1.19 where "slow to speak, slow to anger" are in closest proximity, but Jeremias gives no reason for his exposition.

Surely, to equate anger with raka and mōre is to miss the purport of the antithesis. Killing is an obvious sin involving violent action. The other two parts of the antithesis involve some action, that of the tongue. Why should not the mildest involve no action? Is there nothing admirable at all in someone who can withhold his tongue even if angry? Anyhow, there is no evidence that anger is intended here to break out in speech. Moreover, if Jeremias is correct in holding that anger here may be so intended and therefore to be angry is liable to be equivalent to exclaiming 'raka' which he has already claimed is equivalent to mōre, then the potential upshot of his argument is that the angry man does not erupt into serious, harmful abuse but merely mouths a few "harmless insults". 'Angry' would then be emptied of content and it is difficult to conceive why the passage came to be written at all. It seems to me that Jeremias has already adopted his theological stance, "there is no graded punishment in Matthew", and then expounded the text to suit his stance.

Against any light-minded interpretation of this is what Schweizer observes:

"In the antithesis and other sayings of Jesus there is no longer a clear line between willing and acting. Wishing to kill is as bad as killing; what is needed is a new heart, created by God (Jer. 31.33) ...". This is not stated explicitly by Matthew but it is implied in 15.18 "... out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery ..." and in the

1 N.T. Theol., Vol. 1, p.149n.

general idea that man depends on God to which reference has been made (see p. 52 , above). Perhaps the nearest Matthew approaches Jer. 31.33 is in 11.28ff. where he records Jesus' invitation: "come unto me ... take my yoke ... my yoke is easy and my burden light". Those addressed are burdened chiefly by the effort of bearing the yoke of the law or the law reinterpreted by Jesus, among other possible yokes.<sup>1</sup> It is not a big step from the concept of the Torah to that of Jesus' teaching in Matthew's mind.

Speech differs from adultery in that the surrender to the desire to be abusive and the act may well be simultaneous. The utterance of insults shows that the inner battle, to speak them or not, has been lost.

The command to "pray for those who persecute you" in no way detracts from the inwardness of that to love your enemies (5.44). The prayer might be speechless (cf. Rom. 8.26, but it is most likely that words would be involved in designating the third parties).

So when Bultmann writes of 5.22b.: "The passage is not only without analogy in parallel sayings, but it diminishes the hitting power of the antithesis",<sup>2</sup> we may take leave to disagree with his opinion, for the reason given, while conceding that the passage is without analogy.

Bultmann cannot see why: "a term of abuse should be more harshly punished than anger especially in a passage where the concern is to reject all external standards".<sup>3</sup> This is a searching criticism but it is hoped that at least a tentative answer may be found above to the effect that anger which is unleashed and breaks the bounds of social disapproval, at any rate on the part of the person addressed, may well be stronger anger than that which does not.

Bultmann has still another objection to the ascending scale of severity in 5.22, namely that it involves a different meaning for the

1 See Appendix B on the yoke in the Pirke Aboth.

2 Op. cit., p.134.

3 Ibid.

word 'judgement' in two consecutive verses (21,22). This is an argument worthy of respect. It is indeed odd that this difference should appear. However, in Sanh. 1.6 "the congregation shall judge" is taken to refer to the local court. The latter could try and sentence serious criminals (Sanh. 1.4) as we have noted from Tholuck, above. The death penalty could be regarded in two formal senses of the word judgement, judgement by a human court (Ex. 19.12; 21.12 etc.) or more directly the judgement of God (Gen. 38.7,10; Ex. 14.27,28; Num. 16.32) so the word must be regarded formally as ambiguous and elastic in range. It is indeed a peculiar word. I say 'formally' because as already observed, the death penalty and God's judgement were actually regarded as the same (see additional note below, p. 87).

In further objection to the climax: κρίσις, συνέδριον, γέεννα, which Bultmann avers is contrived, he states: "... the Sanhedrin was not an example of something higher than a local court".<sup>1</sup> Why then was it located in the capital city with seventy-one judges instead of twenty-three? Why was it alone permitted to try a tribe, a false prophet or the High Priest? Why was it alone empowered to make war? (Sanh. 1.6).

Jeremias denies that there is any "heightening of the protases", admits that "the apodoses build up to a formal climax ..." but claims "...it is purely rhetorical".<sup>2</sup> This is a bit of special pleading. Matthew's Jesus is never elsewhere merely rhetorical about hell. If he is, then a portion of his Gospel must be joking in bad taste or consist of a number of idle threats.

E. Schürer<sup>3</sup> maintains that Council (συνέδριον) was the word normally reserved for the representative assembly, seldom for civic councils.

1 Ibid.

2 N.T. Theol., 1.148f. n.2.

3 Op. cit., Div. 11, Vol. 1, p.170 n. 461 contd.

Josephus<sup>1</sup> states that Herod was summoned to appear before the *συνέδριον* at Jerusalem. This assists our understanding in that it shows what happened in practice and confirms that the Sanhedrin must have been more important than the local court.

It is also probable that with the definite article the word could only mean the national court.

Bultmann would seem to be out of step with Jewish thinking connected with the theme. The Talmud<sup>2</sup> interprets "...you shall not wrong one another ..." of verbal wrong.

A rabbinic saying reads: "one who shames another in public has no portion in the world to come."<sup>3</sup> An implication of the latter saying is that abusive speech is worse than anger smouldering in the bosom.

Judgement is not used in different but in overlapping senses in 5.21,22. Though not in consecutive verses righteousness cannot mean quite the same thing each time Matthew uses it, e.g. in 5.10 and 6.1. To hunger and thirst for alms giving would be a strange expression, which, if none-the-less valid, would undermine to some extent Bultmann's plea that the context of 5.22 stresses inwardness.

Altogether we may retain with some confidence the interpretation given by Tholuck. Proverbs 15.1 would tend to lend weight to Tholuck's case because it warns of the evil effect on others of verbal roughness: "a harsh word stirs up anger". Also one who expresses his anger in words often becomes more angry himself. His own words add fuel to the fire. However, Lev. 19.18, the prohibition of hating your brother in your heart and Eccles. 7.9: "... anger lodges in the bosom of fools..." provide O.T. support for the gravity of inward hate and anger. Sir. 28.7a forbids anger and 8b shares the primary effect taught by Prov. 15.1

1 "Antiquities," XIV. 9.3-5.

2 Baba-Mezia, 68b (Son).

3 Mada, Hilcoth Deoth. 6.8.



"... a harsh word stirs up anger". While preferring Tholuck's view we dare not be dogmatic.

The word brother will be discussed under 25.31-46, but I must say here that I cannot agree with McNeile that the word is: "...of universal application".<sup>1</sup> Jesus was hotly indignant if not blisteringly angry with the scribes and Pharisees in 23. They were his brother Jews, but not of his community. Primarily at any rate, the word refers to fellow-believers. If Jesus is an example then we may do well to be angry with unbelievers on occasion, though not out of personal spleen (cf. Mt. 5.5).

Our criteria here are then anger, whether provoked or not,<sup>2</sup> insult or final condemnation of a brother culminating in the last. If we were correct in agreeing with the ascending scale of severity we may still affirm that anger and 'raka' are subject to some kind of divine judgement of which human judgement is a type. At any rate, if the final condemnation of a brother is expressed by *pwpe* there would be a close parallel in 7.1-4.

1 Op. cit., ad loc.

2 Bruce M. Metzger op. cit., p.13, claims that *εἰς κη* was added by copyists, despite the fact that the authorities which insert the word are early and important.

Manson, (Sayings, p.155) on the other hand, is inclined to believe that it is part of the true text and due to the editorial work of Matthew. In view of the scathing attack on the scribes and Pharisees in Mt. 23 Matthew might have inserted the word in order to protect Jesus from the charge of disobeying his own injunction as Jesus himself could be thought to be angry when he uttered these woes. Yet it was not so much anger as righteous indignation. It was not due to personal hatred but hatred of hypocrisy. Besides, Matthew put *pwpe* (23.17) on Jesus' lips despite his own ban on it. If 5.22 is written for individual relationships within the community of disciples, as seems clear, then there could hardly be a cause for anger. But in 18.15f. a disciple is enjoined to tell a brother his fault and if he will not listen even to the church, he is to be regarded as a Gentile and a tax collector. This last resort could barely be accomplished without anger. Therefore, on balance, I feel that the word *εἰς κη* ought to be left in the text, for the decision of the church is God's decision (16.19).

Another matter about anger, the effect on others, calls for consideration.

Bonnard and Schweizer believe that the harm done to the brother by anger is the most important point. The former writes: "Le mouvement de colère ... n'est pas condamné en lui-même ... mais pour la blessure qu'il inflige au frère."<sup>1</sup>

The latter lays down: "The crucial point is that attention is no longer focussed on us and our striving to be beyond reproach, but on the other person, and how his living is whittled away by our conduct, even if only by an angry heart."<sup>2</sup>

I propose to answer this interpretation during my discussion of 5.28 (below) where the same stress is laid by these two authors on the wounded party. Suffice it to say here that I do not object to this being taken as a secondary lesson and so part of the criterion of judgement I decline to accept Bonnard's bald statement implying that his is the sole interpretation and Schweizer's that it is "the crucial point".

If Matthew is Jewish, as I believe, his main thrust on anger may well be the effect on the angry person, and this need not be considered a selfish approach because a main attitude is bound to affect others, even if subconsciously. The Jewish attitude to anger is well illustrated by Gen. Rabb. xlix, Sec. 8<sup>3</sup>: "... man's anger controls him", a comment on Nah. 1.2.

1 P. Bonnard, op. cit., ad loc.

2 E. Schweizer, (... Matthew) op. cit., ad loc.

3 Quoted by Abrahams, op. cit., Series 2, 177 (Gen. Rabb. ed. Theodor, p.508).

In Freedman's edition of the same Midrash we find: "A human being is mastered by his anger, but the Holy One, blessed be he, masters anger, as it says, ... 'Nahum 1.2' XLIX 8 (p. 83). Midrash Rabbah trans. into English with notes, glossary and indices by H. Freedman and M. Simon (10 Vols.) London, 1939, Vol. (Gen. 1) p.427).

### Additional Note on Slander

The Jewish background to sins of the tongue is noteworthy, as Matthew emphasizes it and does so in relation to final judgement: 5.21,22; 10.32,33 (par. in Lk. 12.8,9); 12.31,32 (par. in Mk. 3.28,29). Both Mark (3.29) and Luke (12.10) have only the mention of the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, whereas Matthew has both blaspheming against it (12.31) and speaking against it (12.31). Matthew has three other references in the passage to speech, which have no parallels in Mark or Luke (12.34,36,37). Mt. 15.19 has two words out of six on speech, excluding the first phrase "evil thoughts", against Mark's two out of eleven (Mk. 7.21,22). Also Matthew has the more technical and legal word, "false witness", (*ψευδομαρτυρία*); Mark, the more general word, "deceit" (*εβλῆος*); (Matthew also notes the guiltiness of insincere speech, 21.30,31, though this is not explicitly connected with final judgement.) What is most remarkable is that, excepting the parallels already noted, these texts are peculiar to Matthew. So there is a similarity between his emphasis and that of Judaism in regard to the use of the tongue.

The O.T. and Rabbinic Judaism laid much stress on sins of the tongue. The ninth commandment was underlined by Deut. 19.16-19, the punishment to fit the crime exactly, i.e. be the same as that which the false witness aimed to inflict. Uttering a false report and malicious witness were forbidden by Ex. 23.1. Tale-bearing was forbidden by Lev. 19.16. On this Sifra, Lev. 19.6 comments:

"Whoever tells tales, violates a prohibition ... and although not punishable by whipping, it is a grave offence and leads to the death of many souls in Israel ... For an example of the tragic consequences of this violation, read what happened after Doeg's report (concerning the priests of Nob, 1 Sam. 22.6-19)... Even if what he says or repeats be true, the talebearer ruins the world!" (Quoted by Maimonides, 2. p.280, No. 301).

According to Deut. 22.19 the defamer of a bride is to be beaten and forbidden to put her away all his days. On this Maimonides writes:

"Comparison of the laws concerning the defamer and the violator led the sages to the following conclusion: Thus he who speaks with his mouth suffers more than he who commits an act. Thus we also find that the judgement was sealed against our fathers in the wilderness only because of their evil tongues and it is written, 'yet have they put me to proof these ten times and have not hearkened to my voice'. (Num. 14.22· Arach. 15a)". The Commandments, op. cit., Vol. 1, p.234, No. 219.

It can also be a sin not to speak e.g. Lev. 19.17. "You shall reason with your neighbour lest you bear sin because of him". Admonition is beneficial to the one admonished: Deut. 9.7; 29.3; 32.6; Is. 1.4: 48.4; 58.1. Mt. 18.15ff. probably reflects this command to be open about the fault of another, in this case a "brother" - fellow believer - "tell him his fault ..." Habbakuk (1.13) complains that it is wrong for God to be silent when flagrant injustice takes place. There is a Qumran parallel to Matthew's 18.15ff. which is closer to the whole passage especially the part about telling your brother's fault to the church (18.17) after having confirmed his fault by the evidence of two or three witnesses. At Qumran the witnesses were to witness the admonition rather than the fault but

the telling of the fault to the church corresponds almost exactly to the accusation before the congregation. The reference is to Community Rule (CR)VI, part of which is quoted below (p.86).

Connected with this is the first part of Lev. 19.17, "You shall not hate your brother in your heart". Open admonition is the opposite of secret grudge-bearing. As we shall see throughout our study of Matthew attitude is an element in all of his criteria of judgement. The punishment for bearing malice at Qumran was relatively mild, six months to one year's penance, but the Essenes did recognize malice in attitude (CR VII).

The references to speech in the O.T. are extremely numerous. Some examples may be given in order to indicate the emphasis placed upon speech. It can be: like a scourge, Job. 5.21; crafty, Job. 15.5; mischievous, Ps. 5.9; 10.7; 52.2; Prov. 17.4; poisonous, Ps. 140.3; proud, Ps. 12.3; 17.10; vain, Ps. 7.5,8; 144.8; lying, deceitful, false; Ps. 50.19; 52.4; 63.11; 109.2; 120.2,3; Prov. 6.17; 10.6; 12.19; 21.6; 26.28; Jer. 9.5; Micah 6.12; Zeph. 3.13; back-biting, Ps. 15.3; Prov. 25.23; like a sword, Ps. 64.3; Is. 49.2; flattering, Ps. 5.9; 78.36; Prov. 26.28; 28.23; crooked or perverse, Prov. 4.24; 6.12; 8.13; 10.31; 17.20; Is. 59.3; impudent, Is. 57.4; like an arrow, Jer. 9.8; raging, Hos. 7.16; unfaithful, Ps. 5.9; cursing, Ps. 10.7; offensive, Ps. 59.7; hard to control, Ps. 32.9; like fire, Ps. 18.8; Jer. 1.9; Is. 30.27; like a hammer, Jer. 23.29; self-destructive, Prov. 14.3; 18.6,7; foolish, Prov. 15.2,14; evil, Ps. 59.12; Prov. 15.28; 19.28; deep waters, Prov. 18.4; contentious, Neh. 6.6; Prov. 18.6; 16.28; ruinous, Prov. 10.14; insolent, Lam. 2.16; a snare, Prov. 6.2; hypocritical, Ps. 62.4; Prov. 11.9; Is. 29.13; smooth, Ps. 52.21; Prov. 5.3; sinful, iniquitous, Ps. 26.3; 50.19.

The references to Proverbs are perhaps not entirely valid owing to the wide range from which the proverbs were collected, but enough, I hope, has been brought forward to convince the reader that Judaism believed the tongue to be a very important organ. Far from diminishing this belief, the rabbis seemed to emphasize it even more by their interpretations. For instance, the Talmud says of Lev. 15.17, which does not refer to speech specifically: "This refers to verbal wrongs" (Baba Mezia, 58b (Son. p. 347)) and adds: "... Verbal wrong is more heinous than monetary wrong, because of verbal wrong it is written, 'You shall fear your God'." (Ibid. p.348).

Coming very close to Mt. 5.22, not so much in phrasing as in the basic idea, is the Talmud:

"Although one who puts another to shame is not punished by whipping, still it is a grave offence. Thus the Sages say: 'one who shames another in public has no portion in the world to come.' One ought therefore to beware of publicly shaming anyone, whether he be young or old. One should not call a person by a name of which he feels ashamed, nor relate anything in his presence which humiliates him." (Mada, Hilcoth Deoth VI. 8, quoted by Maimonides 2, p.239, No. 251.)

The severity of the punishment here is remarkable in that it is in contrast with the comparatively mild punishment ordained in the O.T. and so similar to that accorded to the utterance of *pwpos* by Matthew. The rabbis were actually more dogmatic and more severe than Matthew for they say that such a speaker has no portion in the world to come whereas Matthew says "he shall be liable to the hell of fire."

Slander was important among the Essenes as seen in texts further to those already cited. Slander of a companion led to exclusion from the Pure Meal and penance (CR VII), Slander of the Congregation was punished by expulsion forever (Ibid). This is a near approach to the unforgivable sin and its consequence in Mt. 12.31,32. The Holy Spirit is implicitly a gift to the community, the church (28.19) because the verbs are plural *ΠΟΡΕΥΘΕΝΤΕΣ, ΜΑΘΗΤΕΥΣΑΤΕ, ΠΑΤΙΣΘΕΝΤΕΣ*, the last followed by "in the name of ... the Holy Spirit". Therefore a sin against the community and a sin against the Holy Spirit are comparable.

In CR VI: "obstinate, impatient speech not according to the dignity of his fellow" is regarded very seriously. It means: "he (the speaker) has taken the law into his own hand".

For merely uttering (not blaspheming) the divine name for any reason, the punishment was dismissal (CR VII).

In Ab. 5.13 we read: "... the fourth type of character regarding disposition is described as follows: (He who is) easily provoked and hard to pacify; (he is) a wicked man".

The originality of Matthew's Jesus in warning against anger is indicated by the lack of evidence that an offence which was not a sin in act was brought under the cognizance of the Jewish law at all. This would seem to confirm that Schweizer's objection, op. cit., ad loc (see p.33) about overloaded courts is mistaken.

The Mekilta is very concerned about slander. "Keep thee far from a false matter" (Ex. 23.6) is described as a warning to those who indulge in slanderous talk (Mek. 3.168, Tr. Kas. 3.9). One interpretation of a false report is a slanderous tongue (Mek. 2.160, Tr. Kas. 2.40f.).

On anger blinding one to the difference between good and evil, see Ber. 29b. For rabbinic references to God's love for the man who does not become angry, see Moïse Schuhl, Sentences et Proverbes du Talmud et du Midrasch, suivis du Traité d' Aboth, Paris, 1878, No. 1276.

Shaming one's neighbour in public and insulting him are two of the sins for which many rabbis felt there would be no release from the pains of hell, see Schuhl, loc. cit., No. 723.

In Ber. 32b, there occurs the story of a prince who called a pious man "raka", because he did not return the prince's greeting, being absorbed in prayer. "Raka" here has the sense of "imprudent" (the prince could have struck him) but it does not denote moral evil as more evidently does.

b Ta'an. 20b has the story of R. Eleazar ben Simeon (dated by Danby, op. cit., p. 800, A.D. c. 165-200) who called a workman "raka", because he was ugly.

The workman was reluctant to grant forgiveness, initially insisting that the rabbi first tell the Workman who had made him how ugly was His handiwork. This shows that Raka, (reka, reqa) was a serious insult, but as it applies here only to bodily appearance, does not compare with more.

Additional Note on the Connexion between Death and Final Judgement

In the religion of Israel and in early Judaism the death penalty was equivalent to final judgement. In the Pentateuch slander is not said to carry the death penalty but it does in Ps. 52.1-5 where we read of the deceitful tongue: "God will break you down for ever ... he will uproot you from the land of the living." Adultery carried the death penalty (Lev. 20.10). Lack of charity, whilst not explicitly said to incur the death penalty, is shown by the rabbis, as we shall see, to be akin to idolatry and idolatry called down the severest judgement of God. In the Pentateuch, one form of idolatry, the giving of one's children to Molech, was to be punished by death (Lev. 20.2). Other forms were to be punished with a fate worse than death. Of idolaters, Lev. 26.29 says: "You shall eat the flesh of your sons ... and of your daughters," and in Lev. 26.30: "... and (I, God, will) cast your dead bodies upon the dead bodies of your idols". The gravity with which idolatry is viewed in the O.T. can be seen besides in 1K. 21.25; 2K. 17.12; 21.11; Ps. 97.7; Is. 2.18; 10.10f.; Ezek. 6.4ff.; 14.3ff.; Zech. 13.2, etc. Specially severe judgement on idolaters is ordained in Jer. 51.47, 52; Hab. 1.12. Perhaps the most significant of these texts is Ezek. 14.3 which implies that idolaters will not be heard when they seek God. This is a spiritually disastrous state because even in "the belly of Sheol" Jonah was heard by God and answered (Jon. 2.2). Idolatry puts a man in a state worse than that of Sheol.

It is because lack of charity is tantamount to idolatry and makes a man "of doubtful lineage" (see the quotation from Maimonides below p. 331) that the former is so awful.

In the context of commands to be charitable found in the Pentateuch, lack of charity is not explicitly said to be connected with final judgement. However, as, in rabbinic eyes, it puts a Jew in the category of an idolater, the implication of judgement is there. The prophets are more explicit than the Law books. In Amos chapters 1-3 various sins are specified, including casting off all pity (1.11), selling the righteous (2.6), oppression of the poor (2.7). Many of the Israelites will lose their life (2.15), though some will be rescued (3.12) - "as the shepherd rescues from the mouth of the lion two legs or a piece of an ear". Condign punishment is prophesied in 1.12; 2.13-16; 3.11-15. The last of these is similar to the decimation of the population prophesied by Isaiah (6.12) which is a result of many sins, described in the previous chapters, amongst which are evidently lack of care for the fatherless and widows (Is. 1.17).

For the Israelites the punishment of death was not only a temporal one. It was final. This is the only construction we can place on several instances of death, e.g., Korah, Dathan and Abiram (Num. 16.32), "swept away with all their sins" (Num. 16.26, 31-33); Achan (Josh. 18.25); Absalom (1-Sam. 18.14).

E. Schweizer is quite dogmatic on this point, so far as the law is concerned. He writes: "... carrying out a death sentence according to the Law of Moses is the same as executing God's final judgement " (op. cit., p. 116). Oscar Cullmann has a more general saying on the subject of death. He writes primarily of the Christian, but also of the Jewish

attitude: "La vie de notre corps est vie véritable. La mort c'est la destruction de toute vie créée par Dieu". (Immortalité de l'âme ou Résurrection des Morts, Paris, 1959, p.34). The finality of death in ancient Israel is underlined by the belief that life in Sheol was dim, shadowy, unreal: "In Sheol who shall give thee praise?" (Ps.6.5) means that a being there has been stripped of one of the highest capacities of man on earth. This idea of Sheol, where all the dead went, however, represents the older view in the O.T. Later, most clearly and authoritatively in Daniel 12.2, a sharp distinction is drawn between two classes of dead men who: "awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt." The wise are going to "shine like the brightness of the firmament" (cf. Mt. 13.46). Manson writes: "The idea of Gehenna as a place of punishment for the godless after the final judgement first appears in the second century B.C." (Sayings, p.107). This statement tends to confirm the truth of Schweizer's assertion at any rate till the date Manson gives, and possibly overlaps it, for it is "carrying out a death sentence" of which Schweizer is speaking, not of an ordinary death.

Loewe writes: "... wherever the idea of the future life came from originally (he has already suggested on the previous two pages, Zoroastrianism, independent discovery, Egypt, Assyria), it was the Pharisees who implanted it so firmly on the people that it has remained an integral element of Judaism and Christianity." (H. Loewe "The Ideas of Pharisaism", an essay in The Contact of Pharisaism with Other Cultures, London, 1937, p.26, Vol. 2 of Judaism and Christianity).

It is unlikely that a clearly defined distinction between heaven and gehenna can be dated with certainty before the emergence of the Pharisees and their separation from the Sadducees. (For the date of this see R. Travers Herford Pharisaism, London, 1919, p.41). The Pharisees received their name during the rulership of John Hyrcanus, B.C. 135-105, see J. Hastings, A Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels, Edinburgh, 1908, 2.351. Herbert Loewe, "Pharisaism" an essay of Transition, ed. W.O.E. Oesterley, (Vol.1, of Judaism and Christianity, p.142) writes: "The most important contribution of the Pharisees to the spiritual life of the times was their vehement advocacy of the belief in the future life". R. Travers Herford, in The Pharisees, London, 1924, p. 170 states: "The belief in the resurrection of the dead had already become general at a time so early as to be definitely expressed in the Second Benediction of the Shemoneh Esreh, i.e. probably in the Maccabean Age; and there must have been a long period during which it was assuming definite form." On p.174 he speaks of "a sudden ray of heavenly light into the dim region of Sheol" as attributable to Pharisaic influence. W.O.E. Oesterley and G. H. Box in A Short Survey of Rabbinical and Mediaeval Judaism, London, 1920, p.166 write: "In some form or other The Shemoneh Esreh was certainly existing in 175 B.C." However, they admit weighty objections and they do not state whether the crucial phrase in the Second Benediction which reads "O Thou that quickenest the dead" (loc. cit., p.167) may not have been added much later.) Indeed the belief that death as a punishment was the same as executing God's judgement may have prevailed into the Apostolic age. We see in Gal. 3.13 that the curse on a crucified man pronounced in Deut. 21.23 was still in effect, so it is reasonable to assume that the same was true of other death sentences.

5.23-26

In 5.23,24, the altar should probably be seen as parabolic for Matthew wrote after the destruction of the Temple in A.D.70. On the other hand he may be recording an authentic saying spoken before that. Up till then, or at any rate till the martyrdom of James, the brother of John, Christian Jews did worship in the Temple (Lk. 24.53; Acts 2.46; 2.1,3; 5.30) but if we take it as parable it is of little account at what point the actual practice ceased.<sup>1</sup> If we were correct in seeing the Sermon as primarily addressed to disciples, then the offering of a gift cannot be with a view to salvation for it had already been received.

The purpose in going to "the altar" must be either for thanksgiving or for sanctification (23.18 indicates the latter). This would have no Christian meaning unless it referred to the offering of Christ and the early church in fact believed it applied to the Eucharist.<sup>2</sup> If so, it is eschatological; see our discussion on 27.46, the Cross as judgement, Paul's words "till he come" and Matthew's words about drinking new wine in the Kingdom of God (26.28). Paul warns that he who does not examine himself, does not discern the Lord's body i.e. recognize that the Lord's body is not only the price He paid in the breaking of his body on the Cross but also the church, eats and drinks judgement upon himself. He who takes the death of Christ lightly or who creates division in the Body (by greed and selfishness 1 Cor. 11.24) or by neglecting to be reconciled, which is the aspect germane to Mt. 5.23,24, invites judgement both temporal and eternal (cf. 1 Cor. 11.28).

1 K.W. Clark "Worship in the Jerusalem Temple after AD 70". NTS, 6, '59-'60, pp. 269-280, argues for a continuance of worship in the Temple after AD 70.

2 Dionys. Areop., de Eccles. Hierarchis, 7.3,8 quoted by Tholuck, op. cit. ad loc.



The  $\epsilon\pi\pi\rho\omicron\sigma\theta\epsilon\nu$  of v. 24 shows that the offering has not yet begun. An offering to God is unacceptable where no reconciliation with an offended brother has been effected.<sup>1</sup> Our criterion here is failure to mend a quarrel with or make restitution to a fellow believer.

Even then, if we connect this saying with 23.18 the gift is imperfect and needs to be sanctified by the altar. It seems then that the reconciliation too must be incomplete without the help of God. This is another instance of the entry of acceptance of the grace of God into a criterion of judgement.

It is possible to interpret the altar as indicating Christ as does T.F. Torrance. Indeed he affirms that Christ is altar, victim and offerer in one, but whether Matthew so intended it is another matter. Solid support for such a view must be sought elsewhere, particularly in Hebrews.

Prison is not a good place in which to try to pay off debts, especially to the utmost.<sup>2</sup> It might well be intended to be reckoned impossible so that final judgement is meant. If so, this would indicate that the connected pericope vv. 23,24 also relates to the end things. Vv. 25,26 simply underline the need for immediate reconciliation and find an echo in Paul: "do not let the sun go down on your anger" (Eph. 4.26) except that in Matthew the person addressed is the offender rather than the offended. So, broadly the same criterion of judgement is reached as in v.24.

1 (Op. cit., Series 1, p.368). Abrahams recalls a significant Jewish parallel: "The man who brought a sin offering and remembered at the very altar that he still held the stolen goods was ordered to stop his sacrifice, make restitution and then come back to his sacrifice (Tosephta, Baba Qamma 10.18)." While no threat of divine judgement is attached to this particular saying, the rabbinic teaching quoted under the discussion of 6.14,15 below tends to show that many Jewish scholars would attach the penalty of final divine judgement to this sort of attitude. Matthew does not append a threat either to this particular logion but owing to its close connexion with 5.25,26 it almost certainly stands under the condemnation of God.

2 To the last quadrans =  $\frac{1}{64}$ th of a denarius.

5.27-28

What does Matthew mean by adultery? Since he quotes the Seventh Commandment we may assume that there lies his starting point. Manson writes: "... in Jewish law adultery is always intercourse between a married woman and a man other than her husband ..." A man cannot commit adultery against his wife ... only against another married man.<sup>1</sup> Bonnard<sup>2</sup> agrees and carries the matter further. Having referred to the Ketuboth and the Kiddushin, Bonnard limits adultery or infidelity not to a man's own wife but the taking of another man's wife. He adds that this does not apply to strange women but only his neighbour's wife and cites in support Sifra Lev. 10.92a. Neighbour is to say Israelite, he explains. The Seventh Commandment does not specify with whom adultery may be committed but the Tenth Commandment forbids coveting your neighbour's wife and Matthew is almost certainly conflating these two commandments in 5.28.

Both Bonnard<sup>3</sup> and Schweizer<sup>4</sup> seem to me to place an emphasis on the effect of the lustful look upon others which is greater than Matthew intends. As Bonnard puts what he believes to be Matthew's aim in close juxtaposition with what he believes it not to be I am obliged to quote his negative points. He writes:

"... le theme de l'adultère n'est pas traité ici dans les catégories dualistes grecques de l'ascèse ou de la pureté personnelle, de la relation avec autrui; ce n'est pas pour préserver de l'impureté que le disciple doit éviter l'adultère, mais pour ne pas faire tort à une autre union conjugale."

We must partly concur with the first phrase, for, unlike the Greek ascetics, Matthew does not regard the body as evil. If he did how are we to explain that food and clothing are necessary in the Father's eyes

1 Sayings, p.136.

2 Op.cit., ad loc.

3 Op. cit., ad loc.

4 Op. cit., ad loc.

(6.25-33): bread and fish are reckoned to be "good gifts" (7.9-11) or that marriage is ordained by God (19.4-6)? On the other hand, there is an element of asceticism in what immediately follows (5.29ff.) though it is not to be taken literally as we shall see. There is also an element of asceticism in 19.10-12 which may contain Greek elements.

The next phrase cannot pass unchallenged. Personal inner purity is one of the things Matthew does emphasize in 5.7, in condemning the lustful look 5.28 and in several other ways, e.g. in 23.28 etc. by implication.

With Bonnard's twofold assertion that the relation with another or wrong to another conjugal union is the way in which Matthew here treats the theme of adultery, we must disagree. We may agree that it is part of Matthew's intent. He does insert the pronoun *αὐτοῦ* after the verb which he need not have done. He could not have said: "He who looks" in 5.28 without an object but he could have left "commit adultery" open-ended as in the Seventh Commandment.

Schweizer also brings in the woman and talks with the man "ignoring the holiness of her desires" (cf. "Susanna"). We cannot dismiss the possibility that Matthew does mean us to observe this but he does not specify a woman with holy desires but simply a woman. To the Jew a woman was a source of temptation. The unkind assumption seemed to be that the majority were only too willing to succumb to any advances by men. Eccles. 7.28,29: "One man among a thousand have I found but a woman among all these I have not found ... God made man upright, but they have sought out many devices". This may be on the far right of male chauvinism and somewhat cynical, but the many warnings to which Moore<sup>1</sup> refers, the substantial space which Proverbs and Sirach devote to the dangers of women (though in the former evil ones are usually designated) are sufficient evidence that Ecclesiastes was not very far from the normative attitude. Moore's analysis of John 4.27: "the surprise of the disciples ... at

1 Judaism, 2, 269ff.

finding their master talking with a woman was quite in accord with rabbinic ideas of propriety" must be taken as correct. Ab. 2.8 (Hillel, probably alive at the time of the birth of Christ)<sup>1</sup> has two phrases on the subject, the former of which may represent the typical Jewish attitude: "... the more maidservants, the more lewdness ... the more women the more witchcrafts ..."<sup>2</sup>

Another Aboth warning (1.5) carries a fearful threat: "... talk not overmuch with women. Regarding his own wife they (the wise men in general) said this: "... how much more regarding his neighbour's wife." Wherefore the wise men said: "Every time a man talks overmuch with women he brings evil upon himself, and he escapes from (studying) the words of Torah and his end is that he inherits Gehinnom". The author of this is R. Jose ben Jochanan of Jerusalem dated by Moore<sup>3</sup> in the second century B.C.

Two verses from Sirach (9.8-9), are particularly apposite not only in regard to looking at and consorting with women but in regard to judgement. They read:

- v. 8     "Hide thine eye from a lovely woman  
          And gaze not upon a beauty which is not thine  
          By the comeliness of a woman many have been ruined  
          And this way passion flameth like a fire.
- v. 9     With a married woman sit not at table  
          And (mingle not) wine in her company  
          Lest thou incline thine heart towards her  
          And in thy blood descendest to the pit."

The quotation from the Aboth is not strongly for or against Schweizer's remark about the woman's holy desires. But if simply by talking overmuch with a woman a man brings evil upon himself, it would seem that there is a hint that women in general are ready to give way to man's lust and so their holy desires cannot be very powerful. Neither this nor the quotation from Sirach lend any weight to Bonnard's understanding of Mt. 5.28. The third line of each verse of Sirach implies that if the man

1     Oesterley, op. cit., p.xvi.

2     For a fuller quotation, see Appendix B.

3     Op. cit., 2 269 n.6, not dated by Oesterley, op. cit., p.5.

advances he will be accommodated. The reference to blood in the last line of v.9 probably means as Charles<sup>1</sup> observes the blood of the offending man shed by the avenging husband. The death of the man may be his final judgement (see pp.87f above). Nothing is even hinted of holy desires on the part of the woman.

Both of these quotations mean that familiarity between a man and a woman is bound to lead to sexual sin. This puts both parties in a bad light and gives prominence to the power of the evil yetzer in both sexes. If Matthew was Jewish, neither Bonnard's nor Schweizer's comments on Mt. 5,28 are buttressed in the slightest by these typical Jewish attitudes. As I hope to establish Matthew's Jewishness, it would be fair to conclude that he did not consider every woman to have "holy desires" - to put the matter at its least offensive. We must leave open the possibility that he had some such story as that of Susanna<sup>2</sup> in mind when he wrote 5,28. Who but a desperately lecherous man would persist in looking lustfully at such a woman "ignoring her holy desires". A man of sensitivity may be upset by the treading of dirty boots on freshly fallen snow. How infinitely much worse to trample on the holy feelings of a woman pure as snow! Schweizer has given a slant to the subject which ought not to be overlooked. Yet we cannot find enough evidence to hail it as the main lesson.

We must also take Bonnard to task on the statement: "Mat. s'intéresse peu à la vie intérieure"<sup>3</sup>. This is incorrect. Matthew is vitally concerned with the internal attitude both of disciples and of others. In 5,7 he presumably could have written "... pure in words and works ..."; if 6,1-8; 16,18 does not show a keen desire to promote right internal

1 Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, (2 Vols.) ed. R.H. Charles, Oxford, 1913, 1.347 n.9 cont. ("Sanh. T.B. 100n; Yeb.83b. read this line '... all her slain are a mighty host', which puts the woman in a worse light, cf. Prov. 7.26.)

2 Charles, loc. cit., 1. 638-651.

3 Op. cit., ad. loc., (p. 66).

attitudes to almsgiving, prayer and fasting it is difficult to see what the vital significance is; the warning about anxiety 6.25ff. is aimed at the mind; in 7.21-23 a correct oral confession and mighty works done in Jesus' name are no substitute for a right motive, though a lack of good works is part of the implicit charge against these "evildoers", cf. 7.16. In 8.26a the rebuke of fear and of little faith must bear upon the inner man. In 14.13 Jesus' withdrawal after the news of John the Baptist's execution can only have to do with Jesus' emotions for he neither said nor did anything other than withdraw according to the record. In 23.5 the motive of good works, cf. 5.12, and in 23.23-28 the sharp distinction between external acts and inner state are patently the nub of the matter. The one-talent man's opinion of the master (God) was the reason for his lack of industry (25.24, cf. 15.19 where other evil works are an outflow from the heart). It may surely be inferred from the surprise of the cursed in 25.44 that if they had known Jesus was in the least of his brethren they would have hurried to his relief i.e. if they had anticipated recognition for their good deeds. So their sin was not only one of omission but one of inner disposition.

Lest it be reckoned that I have been unfair to Bonnard in selecting one short saying - unfair despite the fact that he is evidently laying down a principle - I must quote some more of his material on the same theme:

"La convoitise, dans les écrits bibliques, n'est pas principalement une passion qui consumerait l'intérieure de l'homme; elle est une passion en action; le fait qu'elle est constamment mise en relation avec le coeur, c'est à dire avec la volonté comme ici (cf. Rom. 1.24), ou avec la chair (Gal. 5.16; Rom. 13.14; 1 Pi. 2.11) le montre bien. L'homme qui convoite la femme de son prochain, la recherche et la regarde pour la lui ravir. A cet homme mobilisé dans une intense activité du coeur, de la chair et du regard, on comprend que Jésus dise qu'il a déjà commis l'adultère; il a déjà ravi son épouse à son frère." <sup>1</sup>

Bonnard's definition of heart is biased. The heart in the N.T. does not only comprise the will but also the reason and the emotions.<sup>2</sup>

1 Op. cit., ad loc.

2 A Theological Word Book of the Bible, ed. Alan Richardson, London, 1950, p.145.

Something that is willed does not necessarily take place. David willed to build a temple but was forbidden though commended for the intent.<sup>1</sup> May a man not be condemned for an evil intent? A man may will something but his reason tells him that he may be found out and vengeance may be inflicted. Or he may will something but may not will it strongly enough to overcome the obstacles. Or he may will to do it when the opportunity presents itself but a reasonable opportunity may never present itself or he may lack the cunning to make the opportunity.

All these possibilities would entail a stewing and festering of desire without any consummation and fail to be "une passion en action". The last sentence quoted from Bonnard is of course correct because it is simply a repetition of what Matthew says in 5.28. But Bonnard has appended it to his argument as if it is the appropriate conclusion to his foregoing remarks and this is not necessarily so.

All the same Bonnard provides a corrective against interpreting the logion as meaning mere dalliance. A man who commits adultery in his heart is not merely playing with the idea but has a genuine intention of carrying it out.

We need not dispute Bonnard's references to Romans, Galatians and 1 Peter. We know the flesh cries out to have its desires gratified. Rom. 13.14 and Gal. 5.16 tell how we may avoid giving rein to the flesh. These quotations by no means prove that a willed desire always bears fruit but only that it has a strong tendency to do so.

Also significant in connexion with this debate is Matthew's omission of Mark's words "against her" (Mt. 19.9b., Mk. 10.11, see p. 85 above). Matthew must have been aware of those words and so presumably could have used "against her" ἐν' αὐτήν in 5.28 instead of the plain pronoun. "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts ..." Mt. 15.18 (as well as evil deeds) is a rather good example of the fact that Bonnard's emphasis is unsound.

1. 1 Kings 8.8; 2 Chron. 6.8.

Moore summarizes much of what was written on this topic in Judaism:

"Jewish teachers recognized that the imagination of sin is not only a temptation, but if dallied with instead of resolutely expelled, is itself a sin."<sup>1</sup> Are we to suppose that Matthew is less profound than Jewish teachers? This may be answered in the words of Manson "The difference between the ethic of Jesus and that of Judaism is again (he has just been likening Kant's 'good will' to the great commandments, Mt. 22.38f. and pars.) simply this, that with Jesus the fact that the good heart is fundamental is accepted and is carried to its logical conclusion while in Judaism (and he means Judaism at its best) the whole apparatus of Law and Tradition is still maintained beside the moral principle which renders it obsolete." Referring to Mk. 2.17, "... I came not to call the righteous but sinners" (par. Mt. 9.13) and the sayings concerning trees and fruit (7.16-20; 12.33) and the teaching about what defiles a man (15.18f. and par.), he adds: "... the follies and crimes of men are the signs and symptoms of the morbid condition of men's souls. This is the fundamental point and the explanation why, in the ministry of Jesus, so much stress is laid on repentance (*μετάνοια*, change of character) rather than on reformation of behaviour."<sup>2</sup>

In connexion with the heart it is worth reminding ourselves that Mt. 12.35 is peculiar to him and he alone has the doublet on trees and fruit, cf. also 9.4; 18.35.

Besides this general statement, Manson remarks on Matthew's stress on inwardness. On 5.21-24 he speaks of "... the insistence on the inward disposition."<sup>3</sup> On 5.28 he writes: "The lustful look ... shows just as clearly (as the adulterous act) the kind of character that is within. And the character is that of an adulterer in God's sight even though there has been no adulterous act ..."<sup>4</sup>

1 Judaism, 2.267.

2 The Teaching of Jesus, p.307f.

3 Sayings, p.155.

4 Sayings, p.157.



We may conclude that in 5.28 the principal criterion of judgement is that of the state of inner heart. Injury to the divorced woman comes out in 5.31,32 and since it has some connection with 5.28, may therefore be accepted as a secondary criterion in 5.28. But the immediate link is with 5.29,30 where the crux is the avoidance of personal damnation. Of all the Synoptists Matthew is the one who is most concerned about the state of the heart as he alone has, besides 5.22,28; 18.35 etc., two logia on the subject of trees and fruit (7.16-20; 12.33). This finding applies with almost as much force to anger (5.21) as to 5.28 though 'whoever is angry' has an object, namely brother, which makes it more likely that the injured party is considered than in 5.28.

While Schweizer's contention that: "The common Greek term actually means injuring her adulterously"<sup>1</sup> is correct,<sup>2</sup> his underscoring of this aspect in what he adds: "This shows how the purpose here is to protect the rights of the woman"<sup>3</sup> has to be modified by the following considerations (and these apply also to the prominence Schweizer gives to the woman's imagined 'holy desires'). No backing for this stress may be gleaned from the LXX where in both Lev. 20.10 and Ezek. 23.37 the verb πορεύω is followed by the plain accusative. In the latter case, adultery with idols, one could hardly claim the harm to the idols was a significant element! In Gen. 39.11, where the context indicates that adultery is the sin in question the preposition ἐναντίον occurs with the genitive (τοῦ θεοῦ). This probably carries the idea, "hostile to" as in Acts 7.10. In Ps. 51.4, again, the one sinned against is God not another party, and God is represented by the dative, σοί. Though in both instances the verb is ἐπαρτίωω, the idea of adultery, undeniable in the first, is probably comprehended in the second whether or not the author of Ps. 51 is

1 Op. cit., ad loc.

2 It is implicit. See Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich, op.cit., p.528.

3 Ibid.

David.<sup>1</sup> If it were David then it would be certain that his adultery with Bathsheba was in mind.

Another possible argument against the emphasis of Bonnard and Schweizer is that when Mark wants to underline the injury to the woman he uses ἐπὶ (Mk.10.11) ἐπὶ αὐτήν. These words are omitted by Matthew (19.9) as in this case he evidently did not want to lay stress on the harm to the woman. Was it not open to Matthew to employ ἐπὶ in 5.28 if he had wished to entertain the above interpretation in the foremost place accorded to it by Bonnard and Schweizer?

One would not object if Schweizer had put it "... one of the purposes here is to protect the rights of the woman" instead of "...the purpose here ...".

Adultery is here seen as possible in the heart (mentally, imaginatively). Jesus here develops the rabbinic doctrine of kawwannah making it clear and specific and making a definite stand. How He came firmly down on one side may be gathered from two contrary opinions in the Talmud, "...the evil thought God does not reclaim as deed ..."<sup>2</sup> . "Intentions to transgress are worse than the transgression itself."<sup>3</sup> The latter is a typically rabbinic overstatement. A more sober statement is found in Tractate Kalla c.1 (quoted on p. 110 below).

A considerable amount of Jewish material has already been put forward on the general subject. Here we pause for a moment to observe that the danger in a concupiscent look is exhibited in Job. 31.1; Sir. 23.4-6; 26.9-11; Pss. of Sol. 4.4-5; Test. Iss. 7.2. The last of these is particularly close to Mt. 5.28.

1 . For discussions of the authorship see I. H. Eaton, Psalms, London, 1967, p.139; The Book of Psalms, ed. A. F. Kirkpatrick, Cambridge 1910, p.285ff.

2 Tr. Kidduschin, f.40.1.

3 Tr. Joma, f.29.1.

Evidently the sin in the heart is a sin against God as the other party might not even be aware of its commission. It would then be reminiscent of Psalm 51.4 "against thee, thee only, have I sinned".

In vivid terms the disciple is commanded to remove even the occasion of temptation which came through the eye and was stimulated by the hand. This, of course, cannot be taken literally as the seat of sin has just been declared to be in the heart. It means rather to sacrifice the pleasurable occasion by which lust is fomented. So this voluntary self-sacrifice would enter into our criterion.

We have already seen that the O.T. punishment of adultery was death and that Matthew looking at this through Jewish eyes would regard that punishment as final. What T.W. Manson says about the possible link in Matthew's mind between vv. 29f. and vv. 27,28 is therefore relevant: "29f. These verses are linked to the preceding by the offending eye. In Mark the eye is dealt with last (Mk. 9.43-47). It may be that Matthew has reversed the order to make a better connexion."<sup>1</sup>

Taking this reversal with Matthew's Jewishness I believe he did want to make a better connexion. Though Manson adds: "But there is no real connexion,"<sup>2</sup> this does not affect my theme which is concerned only with Matthew's views.

According to a Midrash<sup>3</sup> on Joseph and Potiphar's wife, Joseph was on the verge of succumbing to her wiles when the vision of his father's face arrested him. In the light of 5.48 "be perfect ... as your Father in heaven ..." which entails keeping your Father in mind, Matthew may have been thinking of Joseph's victory over the evil yezer. Anyhow 5.48 is the climax of the section and is in view throughout.

What exactly is the criterion of judgement here? Is it a glance or a gaze and does it mean with intent to carry out the deed if external

1 Sayings, p. 157.

2 Ibid.

3 Pirke de R. Eliezer, trans. G. Friedlander, 1916, c.20. See also Louis Ginzberg, The Legends of the Jews (7 Vols.) Philadelphia, 1910, Vol. 2 pp. 53f. and Vol. 5, p.340, n.121 for several rabbinic references.

obstacles were removed? It might seem either that the intention is as bad as the deed or that to look lustfully is adultery even if in the heart only. Πρὸς τὸ (v.28) with the infinitive generally, in the N.T., carries the idea of intention. Matthew's use of it elsewhere: 6.1; 13.30; 23.5; 26.12 has "clearly final force", writes Moulton, but he adds: "except perhaps in Mt. 5.28 where it might rather seem to explain βλέπων than to state purpose".<sup>1</sup> Blass-Debrunner-Funk hold the same general view and appear to make the same exception for they write that πρὸς τὸ "denotes purpose" (or result); 5.28 "with respect to".<sup>2</sup> The R.S.V. and N.E.B. translate in terms that show agreement. The R.S.V. has "... everyone who looks at a woman lustfully..." Luther<sup>3</sup> held to the same sense. It is certainly more in accord with normal behaviour, for it is more normal to look lustfully than to look with the intention of lusting. The latter indeed might be said to be abnormal, if what it would mean is to go about looking at women in order to stir up lust within oneself. If we accept the translation "looks lustfully" it makes our criterion of judgement more widely applicable and more searching, because many more are inclined to do it and they much more often than those who would "look with intent..."

However, the distinction between purpose and result in this case is hard to draw. In practice it may not greatly matter whether βλέπων... means looking in order to lust or looking as a result of lusting, or looking the result of which is lusting. Unless a man is an imbecile he

1 James Hope-Moulton, A Grammar of New Testament Greek, Edinburgh, 1908, Vol.1, p.218.

2 F. W. Blass, Blass-Debrunner-Funk, Grammar of New Testament Greek, London, New York, 1898, para. 402(5).

3 "The Sermon on the Mount and the Magnificat" Luther's Works, Vol. 21, Ed. J. Pelikan, ad loc.

knows that to keep gazing will stir desire and that if he is lustful looking will feed the fire. In 6.1; 13.30; 23.5; 26.12 the idea of intention is almost certainly present and if a man knows, as know he must if he is of normal mentality, that the consequence of his looking will be lust then there cannot be a significant gap between purpose and result in 5.28. It is worth reflecting that in the two cases that Matthew treats in a way parallel to 6.1, namely 6.7 (prayer); 6.16 (fasting), the construction is *ὅπως* with the subjunctive which, say Arndt and Gingrich,<sup>1</sup> indicates purpose.

Matthew uses *ὥστε* elsewhere when he does not wish to express purpose, e.g. 12.12; 19.6; 23.31. This may be significant. So, if I have to make a decision on this I come down on the side that *πρὸς τὸ* in 5.28 indicates purpose. It seems to me better to follow the grammar wherever it leads than to make an exception of 5.28, for no better reason than to make more plain sense. Looking with the intention of lusting is not, after all, nonsense.

Justin (2 Apol. 61)<sup>2</sup> makes the *τῇ καρδίᾳ* tautologous with *παρὰ τῷ θεῷ* but this would not be a fulfilment of the law consistent with the deepened understanding of the sixth commandment, with the law about swearing and with the other antitheses.

There may be a parallel between anger and lust. Just as there are degrees of culpability in anger, so in lust. What a range of guilt there may be in the lustful look! One may persist in relishing the thought and, though this is not the whole purpose of the new prohibition, resolve to seek the chance of putting the thought into effect. Another may reject the temptation almost immediately after a brief struggle. In

1 Op. cit., p.580.

2 The Writings of Justin Martyr and Athenagoras, trans. Marcus Dods, George Reith and B. P. Pratton, Edinburgh, 1867.

between these two, there are many possible gradations. While leaving the line between mortal and venial sins to the Judge, we might suppose that the present participle, βλέπων, means continuous looking. The aorist not the present infinitive is used ἐπιθυῆσαι. This would indicate either a timeless action or one single action, consistent with the aorist ἐποίησεν. These contrast with the present tenses of v. 32 ποιεῖ and μοιχᾶται, representing a constant state of guilt.

William Barclay put it well: (The saying) "condemns the prying, peering look which uses the eyes to foment desire."<sup>1</sup>

The overall conclusion must be that possibly even a glance, but probably a longer look, that yields to lust is a criterion of final judgement, final because Gehenna is twice mentioned in connection with the surrender demanded in vv. 29 and 30 (cf. 18.9).<sup>2</sup>

Luther in a well known passage states:

"The doctors have laid down a distinction with which I also am content to leave the matter and that is that an unpure thought, if unaccompanied by the acquiescence of the will is not a mortal sin."

Then he quotes an anonymous father:

"I cannot hinder the bird from flying over my head but I can easily prevent it making its nest in my hair or pecking off my nose. Notwithstanding, however, it is still sin but comprehended in the general pardon."<sup>3</sup>

The bird flying over the head is inappropriate because βλέπων πρὸς τὸ ἐπιθυῆσαι involves a measure of yielding to temptation, however, it is interpreted. Birds cannot fly into the head.

As Jesus is here recorded as speaking of the deepened seventh commandment we may assume that γυνή is to be understood as wife and that adultery not fornication is intended. However, fornication may be

1 Ethics in a Permissive Society, London, 1971, p.41.

2 Noted by Tholuck, op. cit., ad loc.

3 Vitae Patrum Patrologia Series Latina, LXXIII, quoted by Luther in "The Sermon on the Mount," Luther's Works, Vol.21, ed. J. Pelikan, p.88.

in the background for it could be regarded as adultery in advance, so the saving clause of v.32 and 19.9, is often interpreted.<sup>1</sup>

According to Derrett<sup>2</sup> adultery can denote any sexual activity outside marriage. After pointing out that the Jewish concept of adultery was not the same as the English, he gives reasons for widening the meaning as follows:

"the explicit prohibition of a man's adultery appears at Lv. XVIII. 20, and it is to be observed that coveting the neighbour's wife is separately dealt with at Ex XX.17, while incest and whoredom are distinctly forbidden by various other commandments. Hence 'sexual irregularity', or 'fornication' will approach nearer to the meaning of N'F than 'adultery', and this is confirmed by the constant biblical use of this root for the metaphor of religious unfaithfulness, unconfined to gender or marital status. Did Jesus mean, by πορνεία, what we mean by 'adultery', or did he not rather mean the concept N'F, which by his day (outside criminal contexts) meant the whole range of sexual experience?"

The criterion is unqualified. No allowance is made for bored manual workers, for tired business executives, for war-weary soldiers or people with nervous disorders needing diversion or distraction.

I conclude that the adulterous thought, cherished with the intention of carrying it into effect, is the criterion of judgement here. It belongs in the category of final judgement because of the connexion which Matthew sees between it and vv. 29,30 where final judgement is explicit, and because the punishment of adultery was death which to Jewish eyes was equivalent to God's final judgement.

- 1 Another interpretation makes fornication refer to "forbidden degrees". This is favoured by H. Baltensweiler, Benoit and Bonnard, see D. Hill op. cit, ad loc. Of the exceptive clause Benedict Green (op. cit., ad loc.) writes: "The quasi-legal phrasing strongly suggests it has Deut. 24.1 in mind, where key words are 'some indecency'".
- 2 J. Duncan M. Derrett, Law in the New Testament, London, 1970, pp. 371,372.

### Additional Note on Women in Matthew

5.28 might be a key to Matthew's attitude to women. It might be a sign of Jewishness in that Jewish opinion of the period was veering towards a much greater respect for women. An interesting indication of the enhanced status of women in the Essene Community is found in the extension of the precept of Lev. 18.13 to cover a man and his niece. The Damascus Rule (DR V) puts it: "Although the laws of incest are written for men, they also apply to women". While Matthew does not mention as many women as Luke, those whom Matthew does mention are favourably treated with the obvious exceptions of Herodias and her daughter (14.1ff.).

Matthew alone records Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and "the wife of Uriah" in the genealogy (1.3,5,7). In the case of Rahab and Ruth this may be a sign of his universalism as both were heathen. But it may also be a sign that he valued women.

In the birth narrative (1.18-25) Matthew may well be defending Jesus and therefore Mary against being "the son of a harlot" and "the harlot", respectively. The former phrase is found in the Pesikta Rabbati xxi. p.100c; the latter in b Sanh.106a "... she played the harlot with carpenters" (Herford, Christianity in Talmud and Midrash, pp. 48,304f.).

Herford, loc. cit., pp. 63-78 passim, shows that the latter passage which is about Balaam must refer to Jesus, for Balaam is used as a pseudonym for Jesus. The rabbis reckoned Balaam to be a type of Jesus as both encouraged Israel to apostatize.

Matthew alone noted Jesus' commendation of the Canaanite woman "great is your faith" 15.28 (cf. Mark 7.29, who simply records that her daughter's healing is a result of her faith; Luke has no parallel).

In 12.42 Matthew shares with Luke (11.31) the compliment to the Queen of Sheba in his ardent appreciation of her earnestness in seeking wisdom and in placing her in parallel with Jonah whom Matthew alone calls 'the prophet' and who was of the male sex.

Matthew alone adverts to Pilate's wife's dream (27.19) and how she dared to try to influence a judicial decision. Tacitus (Annals, iii. 33ff.) observed that though governors' wives were forbidden to accompany their husbands, there were many exceptions. If this was the official policy however, it must surely have been very unusual for a wife to interpose her will in a judicial case.

On the whole then, Matthew exalts the status of women. It is perhaps significant that the Mekilta has a sound argument regarding the status of mothers which probably reflects the ideal Jewish attitude to women. Comparing Ex. 20.12 and Lev. 19.3 in that the order, father first then mother, is reversed in the latter, it concludes: "Scripture thus declares that both are equal." (2.2, Tr. Pis. 1.20, cf. 2.257, Tr. Bah. 8.9ff.)



5.29 - 32

5.29,30 arise out of the current debate between the Pharisaic schools of Hillel and Shammai: "for any pretext whatsoever" is typical of this controversy and hints at an anti-Hillel attitude on the part of the questioner. Matthew's exceptive clause puts him on the side of Shammai. Again the criterion of judgement is absolute purity and absolute loyalty to one's spouse. A single sexual union for each man and woman is the design of the Creator. Departure from that is adultery, for which punishment has been noted in the previous verses. The single exception *παρεκτὸς λόγου πορνείας*, possibly means pre-marital intercourse which had been dishonestly concealed from the other party at the time of the wedding. It could also mean unchastity in the general sense including homosexuality, and this is more probable because in the former case the marriage could have been annulled, see Deut. 22.20 where provision is made for the situation in which the tokens of virginity were not found. A one-flesh bond (19.6) already broken de facto might as well be broken de jure. The innocent party is free to remarry, otherwise all parties concerned are adulterous and the man who divorces his wife has the added stigma of pushing her into the arms of another, so compounding his guilt.

The whole matter of divorce and remarriage has been well put by Dungan who amplifies Jesus' recorded saying as follows:

"The intention of the Creator is strict monogamy, a single sexual union for each man and each woman; your constant divorcing and remarrying is a brazen effrontery before God. What these Pharisees get from Jesus is essentially a stern denunciation of their sexual vagrancy, holding up against their legitimized lust a view of marriage in which divorce does have its necessary place, but solely as the unavoidable legal consequence of failure at a deeper level of marital kinship."<sup>1</sup>

1 D. L. Dungan, The Sayings of Jesus in the Churches of Paul, Oxford, 1971, p.114.

Jeremias makes the pericope on divorce and remarriage an example of Matthew's belief that the time of salvation is beginning. He writes,

"Jesus' rejection of divorce must have seemed harsh, not only because it cancelled out a Jewish step forward (protecting the woman), but still more because it expressed a criticism of the Torah (Deut. 24.1). The criticism of the Torah can only be properly understood if we set the rejection of divorce in the context of the discussion on divorce (Mk. 10.2-12, par. Mt. 19.1-12), in the course of which Jesus' opponents rely upon Moses while Jesus goes back to the creation story. The rejection of divorce is therefore preceded by the proclamation that the time of the law has run out, because the time of salvation is beginning, the time in which the original will of God, the pure Paradise-will of God, is valid."<sup>1</sup>

Divorce and remarriage are associated with final judgement in reference to vv. 29,30. Remove all occasions of stumbling or be consigned to Gehenna. It follows from what Jeremias has said that part of the criteria of judgement in this case is whether one has availed oneself of the salvation of God or not. In 19.11, in reply to the disciples' understandable misgivings about marriage Jesus says "not all men can receive this precept, but only those to whom it is given". The passive, "it is given", *δεδοται* indicates "God gives". It is a fair inference that ability to maintain a marriage is a gift of God, but it does have to be continuously asked for (7.7). For the general matter of help from God see p. 52 above.

1. Joachim Jeremias, The Sermon on the Mount, p.26.

Additional Note on the Meaning of Amputation

The absurdity of taking 5.29,30 literally is well brought out by Luther (Luther's Works, op. cit., Vol. 21. p. 91). He writes: "Are we supposed to cripple ourselves, to make ourselves lame and blind? In that case we would have to take our own life, and everyone would have to commit suicide. If we are supposed to throw away everything that offends us, first we have to tear out our heart. But that would be nothing else than abolition of nature and all the creatures of God."

Still more effective (because not open to such an objection as that the heart was omitted from 5.29,30) is his comment on Mt. 19.12 (Ibid.): "He (Christ) makes a distinction and contrast between those who have been castrated by human hands and those who have been castrated neither by human hands nor by nature."

On the other hand, J. Duncan M. Derrett (Law in the New Testament: Studies in the New Testament, London, 1977, Vol. 1, pp. 8-24) who sets off to explain how the verses would be readily understandable to the Jew of Matthew's day finishes by hinting that perhaps literally putting out an eye or amputating a hand or foot was still practised among the Jews. However, the evidence he gathers is almost exclusively non-Jewish, e.g.: "Galen (A.D.129-199) (who) speaks of the practices of maiming runaway slaves" or Maximus Tyrius (A.D. 125-185) a Palestinian who: "... says that the disease of the soul should be cured by removing bodily powers" (loc. cit., p.15).

The nearest concrete example is from Josephus (Vita § 177) a case of amputation of hands by the Galileans for forgery. Derrett quotes Mishneh Baba Quamma VIII.1 which shows that the contrary policy was current among the Pharisees: "Eye for eye" means compensation for injury and no one has a right to insist upon talio (Mishneh Baba Quamma VIII.7 and H. Danby's note The Mishnah, thereon; Maimonides, Code (Mishneh Torah), XI (Book of Torts), IV.1, 9-10 (trans. Klein, New Haven, 1954, p.161)).

In any event, there is no known case of any Christian at the time of Matthew taking the verses literally by mutilating himself, though the famous case of Origen's self-castration occurred much later. Moreover, it is highly dubious whether Jews as a whole would depart from the doctrine of the scribes and Pharisees, and Matthew specifically urges Christians not to do so (23.3).

Derrett seems to think that the Jews in general departed from the scribal law, but he gives no evidence to support this opinion. Indeed the only exception he gives to the evidence that there was no practice of amputation among the Jews, (Deut. 25.11,12) was he admits (loc. cit. p.10) held by Jewish law to mean: "merely that the man who has suffered the indignity is entitled to damages (pecuniary compensation) from her (the female aggressor) for the insult (Mishneh etc., Ibid., Derrett, p.12).

Josephus (Ant. XVIII.1,3, 14) testifies to the fact that the Pharisaic influence was predominant among the Jews, so that any hint that amputation was practised among them is likely to be wrong. See also Moore, Judaism, 2.317.

However, Derrett does succeed in showing that literal amputation would be comprehensible to the Jew of Matthew's time. If he had directed his attention to Luther's interpretation he might have argued that the heart was not one of the organs mentioned by Matthew as needing removal.

Luther perhaps took the matter to its logical conclusion or *reductio ad absurdum* without a warrant. However, owing to the lack of Jewish evidence to support Derrett's case, we must dismiss it.

Derrett (*loc. cit.*, p.8f.) has a significant statement on the eye and the hand: "the 'eye' refers to arousing of sexual appetite through the vision and possibly winking, and 'right eye' means peeping, squinting through cracks, keyholes and the like, not merely vision but carefully applied vision".

On the right hand he first refers to his Law in the New Testament, London, 1970, pp. xlv - xlvi, where he had shown that in the East the right hand is not used for sexual (or other 'defiled' contacts). He proceeds (Studies in the New Testament, Vol.1, p.9) to state that "the 'right hand' therefore refers to bribes, presents and other transactions through which women are induced or obtained as objects of sex enjoyment. Furthermore, since divorce comes immediately (5.31,32), the right hand has its very familiar meaning of oath-taking (Gen. 14.22; Isa. 62.8; Dan. 12.7), and alludes to the oaths taken by lovers swearing that they will divorce their wives, that they will marry a lady when her husband divorces her, and so forth."

### Additional Note on Adultery and Divorce

To the Jew adultery was one of the three cardinal sins (Schechter, op. cit., p.205). Matthew is at pains to emphasize it for he alone has the searching warning of 5.27,28. Besides, he doubles the saying on divorce and adultery 5.31f.; 19.3ff., whereas Mark and Luke have it once each (Mk. 10.2ff.; Lk. 16.18). Matthew repeats, though he reduces the length of, what Mark has on asceticism, omitting Mark's reference to the foot (7.29-30 par. Mk. 9.43-49). It is a fair inference, then, that Matthew at this point is typically Jewish in that for him also adultery was a cardinal sin. The Jewish penalty for adultery was death (Lev. 20.10; see also Torat Kohanim, 86d.) Jews were also strict about fornication, for in the Sifre (quoted by Maimonides, 2. p.322, No. 355) on Lev. 19.29: "Do not profane your daughter by making her a harlot ..." we read that this refers to one who gives his daughter for unchastity and it is also implied that a man was forbidden to pay for sexual intercourse.

It was the duty of a husband to divorce a wife whom he suspected of unchastity. In a case of proved adultery he was required by the court to divorce her (G. F. Moore, op. cit., 2.125). This fits in with the exceptive clause of 5.32 and 19.9. Moore says that adultery of the eyes was "a Jewish commonplace" and "a familiar figure" (op. cit., 2.267). So 5.28 is seen to be a very Jewish saying. There is indeed one saying which is verbally close to 5.28: "whoever gazes on a woman intently is as though he lay with her" (Tractate Kallah, c.1.). Moore (op. cit., 2.268ff) gives many other rabbinic dicta.

The importance of the matter of adultery to the O.T. writers is shown more by the gravity with which it is viewed than the number of references. David's sin in the matter of Bathsheba is taken very seriously indeed (2 Sam. 12.1-23). It caused the enemies of Israel to blaspheme (2 Sam. 12-14). Adultery is a type of spiritual unfaithfulness (Is. 57.3ff.; Jer. 3.8,9; Ezek. 23.37; Hosea 1.2 and passim, etc.) and Matthew used the adjective "adulterous" twice (12.39; 16.4) as against Mark's once (Mk. 8.38). Luke does not use it at all, nor does John. "Adultery", na'aph, and cognates are used approximately fourteen times in the literal, and eighteen times in the spiritual sense in the O.T. We say approximately because it is not always possible to draw a rigid line between the literal and spiritual senses. The same is true of zanah and gedeshah, variously rendered "harlot" and "whore", and zanun, taznuth, zenuth, rendered "whoredom(s)", which altogether occur some ninety-three times in a spiritual sense. Two references, Lev. 20.5 and Mal. 2.10ff. highlight the difficulty of defining what is literal and what is spiritual. They also illustrate the connection between them. In the former it is said that Israel played the whore with Molech. Associated with Molech worship was sexual licence, and while the unfaithfulness in worshipping an idol may be primary, the verse also includes physical unchastity. On this, in rabbinic thought, see Schuhl, op. cit., No. 1166.

Matthew's use of the word "adulterous" in a definitely spiritual sense (12.39; 16.4) therefore illustrates his Jewishness. We find that in T. Stramare ("Clausole di Matteo e indissolubilità del matrimonio", Bibbia e Oriente, 17 (2.75) 65ff.) Stramare specifically states that the exception refers to mixed marriages, i.e. between a Hebrew or Christian and a pagan. S. Bartina ("Jesús y el divorcio, La solución de Tarcisio Stramare" Estudios Bíblicos, 32 (4.73) 385ff.) finds that in Matthew's exceptive clause (5.32; 19.9) πορνεία as a scriptural term for idolatry fits better than other interpretations into the context of the sacred endogamy in Israel. These English summaries are to be found in NTA, 20(3,'76 No. 775, 19 (2,'75) No. 531 respectively. The former is a distinct possibil-

ity. The latter I believe to be correct because of the same intermingling of ideas as in the O.T. In Mal. 2.10ff., the idea of spiritual apostasy is so interwoven with that of a Jew both marrying an idolatress (cf. the BSS, commentary on Nah. 3.4: "the mistress of seduction", G. Vermes, The Dead Sea Scrolls in English, p.233) and rejecting the wife of his youth, that is a Jewess faithful to God, that it is impossible to disentangle the God-Judah and the man-wife relations. A crucial matter is the production of a godly seed. God is pictured as seeking holy children (cf. Is. 57.3). To introduce idolatry into marriage is to break up the unity of the chosen people. It was what happened to Solomon's kingdom when "his wives turned away his heart" (1 Kings 11.4). God's people were bound to God and therefore bound to each other. This gives a double point to the statement by God: "I hate divorce ... do not be faithless" (Mal. 2.16). The context mingles the concept of divorce and faithlessness to God, especially in v.11: "Judah ... has married the daughter of a foreign god". cf. Hosea, passim. Matthew has, as we have seen, more interest in divorce than the other two synoptists. In this way too he shows his Jewishness. Among the Romans an attitude even more lax than in the school of Hillel, the liberal wing of the Jewish rabbinate, prevailed. A.H.M. Jones writes of the Romans: "Under the civil law either spouse could divorce the other at will, and the husband might remarry forthwith, the wife after a year (The Decline of the Ancient World, London, 1966, p.335).

Two illustrations may be given here of the differing attitude of Gentiles to the status of the wife.

In the Elephantine Papyrus 1 (quoted by Milligan, Greek Papyri, Cambridge, 1910, p.3 ; B.C. 311-310) the husband is to do no wrong to the wife, both of whom are to enjoy equal rights..

In the Oxyrynchus Papyrus 905 (Milligan, loc.cit. p.34; 170 A.D.) it is implicit that a woman has equal rights. For example the marriage contract is in duplicate so that each party may have one.

Under Jewish law there was no real provision for the wife to divorce her husband, though she could apply to the courts which could rule that he divorce her. The Hillelites never went so far as to recommend divorce "at will". The husband had to find "some indecency" (Deut. 24.1) in her, though this could be rather trivial in practice. According to the Mishnah (Ket. 7.6) there are several legitimate reasons for divorce, none of them trivial:

"If she gives her husband untithed food, or has connexion with him in her uncleanness, or does not set apart Dough offering, or utters a vow and does not fulfil it ... If she goes out with hair unbound, or spins in the street or talks with any man ... If she curses his parents in his presence ... If she is a scolding woman" (defined as one who speaks inside her house, so that neighbours may hear her voice).

Yeb. 6.6 gives other reasons, if she is barren (implied) or if she is a deaf mute (presumably if she becomes a deaf mute, subsequent to the marriage).

Herford (R. Travers Herford, Christianity in Talmud and Midrash, London, 1903, pp. 56ff.) has an interesting discussion on the phrase "... burns his food in public like Jeshu the Nazarene" (b. Sanh. 103a.). His aim is to show that Jesus was a heretic (Min), according to orthodox Judaism, but incidentally he discusses whether "burns his food" can be taken literally as a legitimate reason for divorce, for the phrase occurs in

this connexion in Gitt. 9.10. Herford argues from b. Betz. 29a. where the phrase is applied to a cook and must be taken literally. He supports this by observing that Hillel and Akiba and their school: "were declaring not what was their ethical idea, but what in their view the law permitted". The triviality of reasons for divorce in practice was due to the fact that "the ancient custom of Israel assumed the absolute liberty of a man to divorce his wife at his will and without giving reasons for doing so."

Matthew's Jewishness in regard to divorce does not therefore lie in his agreement either with the school of Hillel or with the ancient custom of Israel - far from it. It lies in his keen interest in the subject and in his treating of the matter solely from the point of view of the husband, and in his agreement in regard to the exceptive clause with the school of Shammai. This can readily be seen by looking at the statement in question as quoted by Herford:

"The School of Shammai say that a man may not divorce his wife unless he find in her a matter of shame, for it is said (Deut. 24.1), because he hath found in her a shameful matter. (Danby, op. cit., p.321 reads like R.S.V., "indecent"). The School of Hillel say (he may divorce her) even if she burn his food, (Danby, Ibid., reads "spoiled a dish for him", Herford's being the more literal translation), and R. Aquiba says, Even if he have found another (woman) more beautiful than she, for it is said, 'If she shall not find favour in thine eyes'." (Herford, loc. cit., p.58).

Besides the exceptive clause Matthew has another alteration of Mark (Mk. 10.11) which Manson calls highly significant (Sayings, p.136). That is the omission of the words "against her" (19.9b). Manson writes of it: "This does not remove the contradiction between the dictum of Jesus and the Jewish definition of adultery (always intercourse between a married woman and a man other than her husband) but it makes it somewhat less obvious." (Ibid.). A possible modification of Manson's view here might be that Matthew intended the words "against her original husband" to be understood. But the point is of little value in demonstrating the Jewishness of Matthew because Luke (Q) also omits "against her" (Lk. 16.18). This is odd as one would have supposed that Luke, like Mark, would have been keen to put the saying in line with Roman law. It is possible (D. Nineham says "likely", op. cit., ad. loc.) that Mark has edited the original saying, adding the two words but unlikely in view of the next verse (Mk. 10.12) which is peculiar to him. It is also unlikely because v.12 begins with the personal pronoun whereas, if it had not been immediately preceded by "her", it should probably have read "a wife".

It is strange that Matthew who normally enhances the originality of Jesus should at this juncture belittle it. This is a pronounced sign of his Jewishness.

In spite of the agreement between the exceptive clause and the school of Shammai, Manson is correct: "Jesus agreed with neither school" (Sayings, p.157 - neither that of Hillel nor Shammai). This is so because his whole approach does not exemplify the rabbinic style, which consists of analysing and defining words of the law, but rather the prophetic (see T. W. Manson, The Teaching of Jesus, p.292), i.e. going back to the original purpose in the will of God (19.4-8). This passage does not put Matthew distinctively in the Jewish (and Israelite) prophetic tradition as the Marcan parallel is close (Mk. 10.2-11). None-the-less, it is a mark of Jewishness, especially when considered along with other examples of the same type of writing.

A good example on another topic is 12.6: "something greater than the Temple" (peculiar to Matthew) and its adumbration not only in 1 Sam. 21.1-6; (Lev. 24.9); Num. 28.9,10 but also perhaps in Is. 66.1,2 where the man who is humble and contrite in spirit is the dwelling that God prefers to the Temple. The word contrite can hardly apply to Jesus except insofar as he identified with sinners at his baptism (3.15), but it is plain that Matthew in particular sees Jesus as lowly (11.29). Indeed Matthew sees Jesus as the very prototype of lowliness in his silence under insult and mockery (26.67,68) and under false accusation (27.13,14), the latter being peculiar to Matthew and specially noted as causing the governor to marvel greatly.

In sum, Matthew's Jewishness on the subject of adultery and divorce consists in the interest, additional to that of Mark or Luke, which he takes in it, the similarity to the school of Shammai in one respect, and the similarity, which he shares with Mark, to the prophetic approach to marriage and divorce. To be akin to Shammai is to be specially Jewish in that Hillel's views were less different from those of the heathen, though it was the latter that passed into Jewish rabbinic law.

Connected by Matthew principally with adultery (5.28) though also with anger (5.22), and elsewhere, is the idea of inwardness. Lev. 19.17a comes close to this in principle: "You shall not hate your brother in your heart". This, however, is a high point of O.T. insight. More typical of the Jewish attitude at any time would be the Mekilta (2.666, Bah. 8.123) which says of Ex. 20.17; Deut. 5.21; 7.25, "It is forbidden only to carry out the desire into practice". The word "only" is quite contrary to and far below the principle enshrined in Mt. 5.28. Therefore while claiming that Matthew is Jewish, we must also claim that this is one of the matters in which he far surpasses much of Jewish thinking.

On God's demand for the submission of the heart, see Sanh. 196b.

For further references to the seriousness of adultery in rabbinic eyes, see Schuhl, op. cit., Nos. 128, 1164. See also Sifra on Lev. 10.92a.

Adultery is one of the sins for which eternal punishment is decreed according to several rabbinic references, see Schuhl, loc. cit., No. 723.



6.12,14,15 and 18.23-35

The Lord's prayer is undoubtedly eschatological. The second petition with its reference to heaven is sufficient to certify this. Only the fourth petition, however, deals with judgement and that is made quite explicit in the warning appended by the author in v.15. We will therefore restrict ourselves to the fourth petition referring to other parts of the prayer only as they affect our understanding of it. One such matter arising out of the first two words "Our Father" invites the question "who is to pray this prayer?" In 11.25 there is a connection between the Father and babes (Father and babes being counterparts). The latter are the opposite of the wise and prudent (wise and prudent in their own estimation). They also correspond to the recipients of blessing in the Beatitudes, especially the first and third. They are the ones, *νηπιόι* (21.15), who are able perfectly to praise God. Matthew uses this word for the youngest stage of childhood only in these two places.

T. W. Manson<sup>1</sup> has shown and J. Jeremias endorses his research to the effect that

"... whereas nowadays the Lord's prayer is understood as a common property of all people, it was otherwise in the earliest times. As one of the most holy treasures of the church the Lord's Prayer ... was reserved for full members."<sup>2</sup>

E. Lohmeyer<sup>3</sup> also holds the same view. Therefore the judgement entailed is directed at disciples.

We may now proceed with the fourth petition. Is the apodosis something that must precede God's forgiveness, a consequence of it or a loose comparison? The Aramaic *k<sup>e</sup>* behind the *ᾠς* would admit of any of the three. In the best text of Matthew the apodosis has the aorist while Luke has the present. Both arise from an Aramaic *p<sup>e</sup>al* and perhaps

1 "The Lord's Prayer", BJRL 38 '55 (pp. 99-113) p. 101f.

2 The Prayers of Jesus, London, 1967, p. 85.

3 Our Father: An Introduction to the Lord's Prayer, New York, 1965, p.57.

we cannot place too much emphasis on tense. Mt. 6.14f. must mean that our forgiveness is prior to God's. Lohmeyer answers his own question:

"...how could a merely temporal element decide the meaning where forgiveness of debts is asked of God to whom all the past and future decisions of the heart are open? So the word *ως* seems to indicate a purely logical relationship between the two clauses.

The very forgiveness which we ask from God and grant to our debtors comes from God Himself so that our action towards our debtors is light of his light, spirit of his spirit, love of his love."<sup>1</sup>

What then if we do not forgive men? It follows that we have not received God's forgiveness<sup>2</sup> and will not, in the end, receive it. It would be inconsistent with the rest of the prayer to see this one clause "as we forgive ..." as something we do by ourselves. It must have the same inevitable quality about it as for instance, "... he who believes in me out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7.38).

Even if this understanding of v.11 were pure conjecture the first petition combined with the fourth and its sanctions in vv. 14,15 show that forgiveness of men, presumably any men, is a vital necessity for the disciple here and hereafter.

1 Op. cit., pp.181,182.

2 If Black (AAGA, pp. 203ff) is right in seeing in the prayer for bread a hint of eschatology, i.e. he regards Matthew's version, 'daily, *ἐπιούριον*', as a mistranslation of what is rendered in Luke "day by day"; if Jerome (quoted by David Hill The Gospel of Matthew, London, 1972, p.238) is right in finding mahar in "The Gospel according to the Hebrews" as meaning "of tomorrow"; if Bonnard (op.cit., p.86) and Hill (Ibid.) are right in interpreting "bread for tomorrow" as including the Messianic banquet then it follows that mutual forgiveness, among disciples at any rate, must have been given. Otherwise one would have to imagine either that the banquet had no guests or that the guests were in a state of irreconciliation - both incompatible with this particular feast. Further evidence of reference to the end issues might be found in the concept of bread from heaven. This, though literally meaning bread from the sky, may, like Canaan, be taken as a type of the highest heaven where God dwells. The gathering of two days' rations of manna prior to the sabbath may also be germane because the Kingdom age is an eternal sabbath.. (Heb.4.1ff.).

Chrysostom says: "... in what way soever thou hast judged for thyself, in the same, saith He (God), do I also judge thee."

"God appoints thee thyself the master of the verdict. The judgement thou passest upon thyself, he will pass on thee."<sup>1</sup>

Writing on Ps. 109.7 Luther imagines this devastating prayer:

"... now I will not forgive him, so do not thou forgive me. I will not obey thy command though thou hast told me to forgive. I will rather renounce thee and heaven and all and go to the devil for evermore."<sup>2</sup>

James saw most clearly that a quarrelsome spirit was a criterion of judgement: "Do not grumble brethren, against one another, that you may not be judged; behold the judge is standing at the door." (James 5.9).

Luke places his partial parallel to Mt. 6.14 (Luke 6.37c) in the context of his parallel to Mt. 7.1 adding: "... do not condemn and you will not be condemned", so making it abundantly plain that final judgement is in view.

Again, Chrysostom says: "... to pray for forgiveness is a mighty blessing, and not to be willing to give the same to others who supplicate it of us is a mockery of God."<sup>3</sup>

Luther expounds well the relation between inner forgiveness and outward forgiveness:

"... if I do not show this (outward forgiveness) in my relations with my neighbour, I have a sure sign that I do not have the forgiveness of sin in the sight of God, but am stuck in my unbelief. You see, this is the twofold forgiveness: one inward in the heart clinging only to the word of God; and one outward, breaking forth and assuring us that we have the inward one. This is how we distinguish works as outward righteousness from faith as inward righteousness, but in such a way that the inward has precedence as the stem and root from which the good works must grow as fruit."

1 The Homilies of S. John Chrysostom on the Gospel of St Matthew, trans. by Sir George Prevost, Oxford, 1852, Vol. 1, p.297.

2 Luther's Works, Vol. 42, "Devotional Writings" I, ed. Martin O. Dietrich, Philadelphia, 1969, p.66.

3 De Compunct. 1.95, commenting on Sir. 28.1-4 quoted by Tholuck, op. cit., ad loc.

Matthew is keenly aware of the need for divine help 7.7-11; 19.26b; and for reward beyond desert (20.9). Further, 7.13 has "enter", cf. Lk. 13.23, "strive to enter". Therefore, what Luther adds is singularly appropriate to Matthew, especially as there is no parallel situated as 6.14,15 in Luke and in Lk. 6.37 no parallel to the threatening part. Matthew does not use the phrase "the grace of God" but the idea of it is very much in his mind. Luther concludes the paragraph: "... if I look and find myself gladly forgiving my neighbour, then I can draw this conclusion and say: 'I am not doing this work naturally, but by the grace of God I feel different from the way I used to be.'"<sup>1</sup>

Luther has a telling exposition of 6.15 "... if he (your neighbour who has sinned against you) confesses his sin and begs your pardon (here he probably has the second debtor of Mt. 18.29 in view) but you refuse to forgive him, you have loaded the sin upon yourself, and it will condemn you as well."<sup>2</sup> On the next page Luther explains that by calling a sin "a trespass", Christ means that it should be confessed.

Chrysostom puts the sin and condemnation of unforgiveness vividly: "... whilst thou art thinking to do despite unto thy neighbour [and he too must be thinking of Mt. 18, in this case v. 30ff.], thou art thrusting the sword into thyself, so increasing thy punishment in hell."<sup>3</sup>

A close parallel to Mt. 6.14,15 is found in Sir. 28.1f.:

"The vengeful man will face the vengeance of the Lord  
Who keeps strict account of his sins  
Forgive your neighbour his wrongdoing  
Then, when you pray, your sins will be forgiven.  
If a man harbours a grudge against another  
Is he to expect healing from the Lord?"

In 18.23-35 the forgiveness man gives his fellow ought to be inspired and empowered by God's forgiveness.<sup>4</sup> It is not an attempt to earn God's forgiveness. Besides the sheer enormity of the first debtor's debt to

1 Luther's Works, Vol. 21, The Sermon on the Mount and the Magnificat, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, Saint Louis, 1956, p. 150.

2 Loc. cit., p.153.

3 Op. cit., p.222.

4 The <sup>28</sup> v. 33 is characteristic of divine necessity, cf. 23.23 Mk. 8.31; 13.7, etc. See Eta Linnemann, Parables of Jesus, Introduction and Exposition, London, 1966, p.111.

the king, ten thousand talents, = 600,000 minas = 60,000,000 denarii<sup>1</sup> is probably intended to mean that repayment by an ordinary citizen is impossible. It is obvious that he cannot accept such a huge remission of debt without releasing his debtor/s from their trivial debt/s to him. If he does not do it at once, he reveals that he has not appropriated what has been done for him by God.

The criterion of judgement in 6.15 is lack of forgiveness primarily of fellow-believers because of the "fencing" of the Lord's Prayer, but in view of the fact that the whole Sermon on the Mount is also aimed at men in general, it may be taken, in a secondary sense, to apply to lack of forgiveness to any offender.

18.23-35 is teaching for the Christian community. It is introduced by Peter's question: "How often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him?" (18.21) which restricts its scope greatly. The debtors in the parable are servants which is a wider word than brother. But both servants owe allegiance to the king. Moreover, the other servants of the king show their compassion by carrying the news of the unmerciful act to the king. This means that they share in the king's outlook and so probably the other two are intended to belong to the Kingdom also. It may be significant also that ἀποδιδῶμι is the verb in v.26 showing that the debt was a loan from the king. An unbeliever in God could probably not be pictured as understanding this matter.

18.23-35 is undeniably about final judgement. The debt owed by the unforgiving debtor is totally beyond the possibility of repayment. He is thrown to the tormentors till he should pay all - that is for ever, for he cannot pay. Refusal to forgive has rendered him ineligible to receive the forgiveness of God. This refusal has its roots in the heart<sup>2</sup> (18.35) so the theme of wrong attitude appears again, as so often.

1 See Additional Note on Comparative Money Values (p.121, below).

2 As McNeile (op.cit., ad loc) observes: "... The important addition ἀπὸ τῆς καρδίας οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλοθεν. "is not found elsewhere". This further underscores the significance of inward disposition seen so often in Matthew.

Additional Note on Jewish Background to the Attitude an Injured Person should adopt

Many rabbinic sayings which provide a backdrop to Mt. 6.14,15 have been collected by Abrahams (op. cit., Series 1, pp. 151-167), e.g. Joseph's forgiveness of his brothers "is set up as an exemplar for God himself!" (p. 155). On this, Abrahams refers to "Pesiqta Rabbati, ed. Friedmann, p. 138a ..." etc. 'Another is: "'Whoever hates any man is as one who hates Him who spake and the world was' (Pesiq. Zut. on Numbers viii seq.)" (p. 160). "'Not even the Day of Atonement atones for wrongs done by man to man' (Mishnah Yoma viii.9)" (p. 162). "... the man who increases the inherent difficulty of reparation by obduracy when asked to forgive ... Maimonides, on the basis of the Mishnah, ... pronounces a sinner and a representative of the spirit of cruelty and hard nature" (p. 163). "'If thou art not pitiful to thy fellow there is none to have mercy on thee' (Buber Tanhuma Genesis, p. 104, cf. Sabbath 151b)" (ibid.). [That] "God pardoneth the man who passes over wrongs" was the rabbinic interpretation of Micah 7.18 (p. 164). Despite many such sayings Abrahams writes that although "no Jew feels out of sympathy with (the Lord's) Prayer", there is an exception, namely Mt. 6.12, "with regard to the condition regarding forgiveness apparently imposed in Matthew's form, which has no Jewish liturgical parallel whatever ... this particular petition ... emanates, not from Jewish models but from the peculiar thought of Jesus himself" (Series 2, pp. 97f.).

Maimonides (op. cit.) also gives illustrations of exhortations to forgive, e.g. "If the offender repents and pleads for forgiveness, he should be forgiven ... All that the Torah objects to is harbouring ill-will (Mada Hilcoth Deoth XI. 6,9)" (Vol. 2, p. 281, No. 302). Demanding payment from a debtor known to be unable to pay is forbidden. He refers to Ex. 22.24 Mek. (Vol. 2, p. 202, No. 234) cf. Jeremias, PJ, p. 310.

Joachim Jeremias, The Parables of Jesus (PJ) trans. S. H. Hooke, Revised Edition, London, 1963, p. 211) writes: "The average value of a slave was 500-2,000 dinars" citing two rabbinic references and one from Josephus. This serves to confirm the enormity of the debt. See also p. 210: "...  $\mu\upsilon\pi\iota\alpha$  and  $\tau\alpha\lambda\lambda\upsilon\tau\alpha$  are the highest magnitudes in use (10,000 us the highest number used in reckoning)".

Evidence of a probable Gentile milieu for 18.23-35 and possibly of a Gentile editor lies in the fact also given by Jeremias (Ibid.) that: "... the sale of a wife was absolutely forbidden under Jewish jurisdiction."

For an apocryphal warning against the unforgiving spirit, see Sir. 28.3-5.

For rabbinic references commending a charitable view of harm done by one's neighbour, see Schuhl, op. cit., No. 213; on pardoning injuries, loc.cit., Nos. 475, 523, 766, 981, 1276; see also Joseph Bonsirven, Textes Rabbiniques des Deux Premiers Siècles Chrétiens; pour servir à l'Intelligence du Nouveau Testament, Rome, 1955, No. 1691. If one bears wrongs in silence, the Most High will give one justice, Schuhl, No. 864. But in contrast to Mt. 18.21f. some rabbis enjoined only three attempts to effect reconciliation, loc. cit., No. 736.

### Additional Note on Comparative Money Values

Richard Duncan-Jones, The Economy of the Roman Empire: Quantitative Studies, Cambridge, 1974, gives a number of figures which give some indication of the purchasing power of money. As to the price of wheat, nearest in time and place to any likely provenance for Matthew is 225 sesterces (later abbreviated to ses.) per modius in Pisidian Antioch at the end of the first century A.D. Pliny's freedmen evidently received between 70 and 80 ses. per month (p. 145, p.30 n.2).  
(4 sesterces = 1 denarius (p.11) and 1 modius = 25 lbs. = 11.3398 kgs. (p.146)

In the second century A.D. an urban slave's allowance was 20 ses. and 5 modii of wheat per month (p. 104 n.1170). In Cato's time (Cato 56-8) field slaves received 4-4½ modii per month and 4.8-6 modii if on hard labour (p.146). Seneca suggests that 5 modii per month was a normal ration for an urban slave who also received payment in cash (p.146). Taking the proportion of payment in kind to payment in cash as 1 : 1-2 (p.11) we arrive at an approximate figure of 20 ses. per month for the category Seneca mentions.

"A ration of 5 modii per month may," says Duncan-Jones (p.147) "have been equivalent to 3,000-3,500 calories per day which is close to modern ideals of 3,300 calories per day for male adults." This is assuming that the calorific value of Roman bread was the same as modern bread (i.e. 3.03 - 2.47 calories per gram, p. 147 n.2).

In the time of Trajan allowances for dependents varied from 16 ses. for legitimate boys to 10 ses. per month for illegitimate girls (p.144). "The basic rate of a Roman legionary was 900 ses. (per annum) from the reign of Augustus to the reign of Domitian (c. 31 B.C. - A.D. 85) and 1,200 ses. from Domitian to Septimius Severus (c. A.D. 85 - 200)." A legionary's pay was probably over and above his own board and lodging.

From these examples the conclusion may be drawn that a denarius was a generous day's pay.

On p.11, Duncan-Jones warns: "The purchasing power of precious metals is not a constant, and there are many differences between ancient spending patterns and price structures and those of modern societies. The discontinuities were in fact so great as to make any linear translations of ancient currency into modern completely worthless. The only valid index of the purchasing power of ancient money remains that provided by ancient prices and wages."

Some idea of Jewish wages at the time of Matthew is given in 20.2, 9, 10, 13, but in view of the context this was probably rather lavish. To hold this confirms what we have surmised from the Roman figures of Jewish prices. Some examples from Danby's Mishnah (p. 797f.) may be given:

In B.B. 5.1 (p.372) a yoke of oxen cost 200 zuzim. The author was R. Judah, dated by Oesterley op. cit., p.15 c. 140-220 A.D. In B.M. 5.1 (p. 355) wheat was 25-30 silver denars to the kor(anon). The rent of a courtyard was 10 selas a year. Ket. 5.8 (p. 252f.) gives a wife's maintenance at the hands of a third person as 2 kabs of wheat or 4 kabs of barley per week, ½ kab of pulse, ½ log of oil, and a kab of dried figs or a mina of fig-cake. Her annual dressing allowance was fixed at 50 zuzim per year. Though this passage is anonymous R. Ishmael commented upon it and he lived in the latter part of the first and the former half of the second century A.D. (Oesterley, op. cit., p.40 n.4).

In B.K. 10.4 (p.346) an ass is valued variously at 100 and 200 zuzim. This is anonymous. In Meil. 6.4 (p.581) a [presumably inferior] shirt and a cloak are both valued at 3 selas. This is anonymous but R. Judah commented on it.

In Men. 13.8 (p.512) an ox is valued at a mina; a young bullock at 4 selas; a ram, 2 selas; a lamb, 1 sela. This is anonymous.

In Erub. 8.2 (p.132) R. Johanan ben Berokah (end of first and former half of second century A.D., Oesterley p. 49 n.7) mentioned a loaf (enough for two meals for one person) worth a pondion from wheat costing one sela. for four seahs.

The following values are given by Danby and, where noted, in The Lion Handbook to the Bible, ed. David and Pat Alexander, Berkhamsted, 1973, (abbreviated to Lion) pp. 105ff.

<u>MONEY:</u>	12 pondions	=	1 denar or zuz
	2 denars	=	1 shekel
	2 shekels	=	1 sela
	100 denars	=	1 mina (According to the Coin Collection, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford this varied a great deal: under Augustus, 84 to the pound; Nero, 45; Caracalla, 60; Gallienus, 270; Diocletian, 60).
(Lion)	60 minas	=	1 silver talent, 6,000 denars to the silver talent.
<u>MEASURES:</u>	4 logs	=	1 kab (= 1.2 litres, Lion)
	6 kabs	=	1 seah (= 7.3 litres, Lion)
	3 seahs	=	1 ephah (= 11 litres, Lion)
	30 seahs	=	1 kor

According to A Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels, ed. James Hastings, Edinburgh, 1908, Vol. 2, p. 819, a drachm-denarius weighed 52.5 gr. and there were 6,000 denarii in a talent so the proportion between the debts of the two debtors in Mt. 18.23ff. was 60,000,000:1. Hastings (D.B. p.199) shows that he used the Attic scale and that a silver talent is meant. Schweizer, op.cit., p.471 makes a talent = 10,000 denarii, likewise Jeremias, PJ, p.210 who quotes Josephus, Ant. 17.323 with 190 to the same effect.

A better idea of Jewish wages at the time of Matthew - better than Matthew himself gives - is given by Joachim Marquardt and Theodore Mommsen, Handbuch der Römischen Alterthümer (7 vols.) Leipzig, 1873-1878, Vol.5, p.471 who state that R. Hillel worked as a labourer for 8 as ( $\frac{1}{2}$  denarius) per day and R. Meir as a writer for 2 denarii per day. On p.52 in the same volume they record that in Rome at the time of Cicero, a day labourer received about 12 as ( $\frac{3}{4}$  of a denarius). The inflation between Cicero and Matthew's time may have been offset by higher wages in Rome than in the provinces.

Dictionary of the Bible ed. James Hastings (5 Vols.) Edinburgh: New York, 1900, Vol. 3, p.834 has probably the most valuable indication of purchasing power when it states that a denarius could buy 36 barley loaves or 12 wheat loaves one inch thick and a span in diameter. It refers to Mishnah Peah 8.7 and Rev. 6.6.



6.22,23.

Its position, sandwiched between logia about money, would indicate that this saying also is about attitudes to wealth. It is probable that ἀπλοῦς is to be taken in the sense of generous and πονηρός in the sense of niggardly. The eye stands for the desires and longings of the heart. The Jewish background to the evil eye may be found in Deut. 15.9 and Prov. 28.22 - the latter has been wittily translated by Moffatt: "... do not eat the bread of him who begrudges you every morsel" cf. Tob. 4.7; Ab. 5.15. See also Billerbeck on 20.15; Romans 12.8;<sup>1</sup> James 1.5.

The reference to darkness and the question "... how great is that darkness?" draws the whole subject (vv. 19.34) into the web of judgement, for great darkness to Matthew is probably a type of final exclusion from the joy of the Lord as is 'outer darkness' (8.12; 22.13; 25.30). Unqualified darkness is used in one instance (10.27) without any evil connotation (but cf. 27.25).

J. Arthur Baird<sup>2</sup> discusses the good and evil eye at some length. The following is a summary of his findings. In the O.T. it refers to (1) the inner perception of mind and heart, Is. 5.10; 29.18; 35.5.

(2) By synecdoche, it stands for the individual (Ps. 6.7; 10.3-9) or more specifically for the soul (nephesh) of man (Ps. 19.7-8). An evil and a good eye were common Jewish descriptions of an evil and a good inner nature (Deut. 15.9, cf. Prov. 23.6-7; M. Aboth 5.16; Sir. 14.10). In none of the uses of eye to mean spiritual perception does it occur with the adjective evil; in every such case it is used in the plural. In the two cases where it refers unmistakably to the inner nature of man, it is

- 1 See on this the comments of Sanday & Headlam (Romans, Edinburgh, 1902, p.357), who find the best illustration in Test. XII Patr. Issachar, where the cognate noun occurs three times and the adjective once. This noun "... was specially suited to describe the generous unselfish character of Christian almsgiving; and hence occurs in one or two places almost with the signification of liberality, 2 Cor. ix. II, 13".
- 2 J. Arthur Baird, The Justice of God in the Teaching of Jesus, London, 1963, p.180ff.
- 3 This is also true elsewhere, e.g. of Memphis where a Greek papyrus was found in which the phrase, eye of my soul, ὄφθαλμος ψυχῆς occurs. "A Dream from the Serapeum", P. Par 51 (B.C.160) line 10, Selections from the Greek Papyri, ed. with translation and notes by George Milligan, 1910, p.19.

in the singular. Since eye in Mt. 6.22 is in the singular and has the adjective evil it would seem more in keeping with Jesus' practice to interpret it here in the second O.T. sense.

This establishes the interpretation, the inner eye.

B. W. Bacon brings out the meaning of duplicity. Bacon writes: "... everything turns on the word *ἀπλοῦς* as against the *δυσὸς κυρίως* of v.24. But if Matthew's were the original context, the adjective in the second half of v.23 should not be *πονηρός*. We should have expected some such phrase as, 'if your sight be double', wandering or inconsistent. The use of *πονηρός* by both Matthew and Luke indicates that the singleness is not contrasted with duality but with duplicity, par.Lk. 11.29-32,34-36."<sup>1</sup>

This suggestion may be accepted without loss of the meaning 'niggardly'. There is an element of duplicity in stinginess (cf. Mal. 3.8 and especially Acts 5.1-10). To add the element of duplicity accords well with 6.24. We arrive at a picture of a character who is tightfisted and deprives God and man of their just due, yet pretends to be religious.

Bowman and Tapp consider that the logion fits in better here than in Lk. 11.34-36, believing that in Matthew's context it is obvious that he means the spiritual 'eye'. They write: "Our Lord's Aramaic must have expressed some such ideas ... as 'clear (good) and 'clouded' (evil). This follows Strack Billerbeck (1.431) who suggests that the Aramaic *sh<sup>e</sup>lim* may stand behind the Greek *ἀπλοῦς* ".<sup>2</sup>

This may well be true, but it does not explain to what 'clear' and 'clouded' refer, unless we are to understand the beatific vision. The context of 6.22,23 determines the meaning which gives the criteria of judgement and the background in O.T. and Jewish<sup>3</sup> use confirms it.

- 1 Benjamin W. Bacon, The Sermon on the Mount, London, 1901, ad loc.
- 2 John Wick Bowman and Roland W. Tapp, The Gospel from the Mount, Philadelphia, 1957, p.177.
- 3 Besides the references given already the good and/or evil eye is found in Ab. 2.12 (good alone); 2.13,15; 5.15 (evil alone), 5.2 (both).

Our criterion here then is simply generosity or stinginess of attitude (cf. 13.22; 19.24; 25.31-46) with overtones of single-minded devotion to God (cf. 6.24) in the intended use of money.

Manson sees the longer version of Mt. 7.1,2 in Luke (6.37,38) as showing "the poetic form" and says that it is "probably the original. It also links up better with the thought of the preceding passage." This is because God's mercy mentioned in Lk. 6.35 (cf. God's perfection Mt. 5.48) means that he is a bountiful giver, which connects well with the commands to love enemies, (Mt. 5.44, Lk. 6.35) and to give (Mt. 5.40ff., Lk. 6.34), but in Luke also with forgiving Lk. 6.37c., cf. Mt. 6.13,14; 18.23,33 and with Lk. 6.38 where giving is again to the fore.<sup>1</sup>

In Mark's partial parallel (9.24) he introduces the idea of measure for measure by warning to take care what you hear. Matthew has not reflected this possibly because he wants to widen the basis of prohibiting judgement - not only to what is heard but what is thought<sup>2</sup> - also perhaps because the prohibition of judging and the concept of measure for measure<sup>3</sup> stand out more starkly when left unqualified. In comparison with Luke, Matthew's version is a warning unrelieved by any accompanying promise of good. Thus altogether Matthew has greatly sharpened the theme of divine judgement and restricted it to adverse judgement.

The passive (κρίθητε, κρίθησεσθε, μετρηθήσεσθε), is commonly the periphrasis for the action of God. Any attempt by man to pass a final judgement on his fellow man is bedevilled by grosser sins - a log (v.4) represents something gross. Those who feel they are on the way to obeying the previous commands in the Sermon might specially need this warning. Setting oneself up as judge usurps the place

1 Manson (Sayings, p.55f.) puts it: "... the merciful man not only forgives the wrong, he goes further and shows kindness to the wrongdoer." This kindness meets with a disproportionate reward "... so that even a little kindness on man's part meets with a lavish reward from God." Matthew is obviously aware that even the gift of a cup of cold water will be rewarded (10.41) but he does not include it in this context.

2 Cf. 9.4 where Matthew alone has the word "evil" and 18.35, peculiar to him.

3 This concept is paralleled in Soṭah 1.7, dated by McNeille, op.cit., ad loc., probably in the 1st Century A.D.

of God.<sup>1</sup> Censure of others transfers the censor back under the law where he himself is condemned by the beam, joist or plank in his own eye. James was, no doubt, thinking of this as well as of Jesus' sayings on abusive speech when he wrote: "... he who speaks evil of his brother judges the law. If you judge the law you are not a doer of the law but a judge." (Jas. 4.11). The man who sets himself up as a judge implies that he himself is flawless. This is hypocrisy, part of which is self-deceit; the other part, more often condemned (6.3,5,16; 22.18; 23 passim) is deceiving others. Both parts are present here. A humble man condemned by a religious leader is inclined to think that his judge must be a very pious man.

- 1 Cf. Jas. 4.12. R. Ishmael (dated by Oesterley, op.cit., p.51 n.11 mid-second century to the beginning of the third century A.D.) said: "Judge not alone, for none may judge alone save one" (Ab. 4.10). The first part of this clearly refers to Jewish courts of law where a plurality of judges was mandatory (Sanh. 1, passim). Though the Mishnah was not compiled at the time of Matthew its regulations were probably in force. So the second half of the saying, which is the one that is relevant to Mt. 7.1,2 may reflect an earlier rabbinic view than that of R. Ishmael. At any rate both Ab. 4.10 and Mt. 7.1,2 probably have in mind the O.T. teaching that God is sole judge in the final sense, see Gen, 18.25; Ps. 75.7; Is. 33.22.

Sotah 1.8 has the significant examples of Samson who "went after (the desire of) his eyes - therefore the Philistines put out his eyes ..." (Jud. 16.21) and of Absalom who gloried in his hair - therefore he was hanged by his hair. Sotah 1.9 has the rather far-fetched examples of Miriam and Moses. The first two examples serve to confirm the interpretation of the passive verbs in Mt. 7.1,2 as divine judgement because the Philistines were probably only instruments of God (cf. Is. 10.5, where the Assyrians are the rod of his anger) and Absalom hanging by his hair was a stroke of Providence making him an easy target for Joab's arrows and the ten spears.

Romans 2.1 and 14.10 tend to show that Paul's teaching here is rooted in the words of Jesus. He asks if those who judge another are free from the same faults. Paul also reveals that he is thinking about eschatological judgement - "... we shall all stand before the judgement seat of Christ." This confirms our interpretation of the passive tenses in Mt. 7.1b,2b.

The plank and the splinter correspond to the contrasting debts of the unmerciful servant and his victim (18.23-25). There is then a hint that one should forgive one's fellow rather than condemn him. Jesus goes further than James. "Judge not" has no object. It is open-ended. James talks of a brother. Though we cannot press this open-endedness far because 7.3,4 refer to brother.

A censorious spirit often attaches to a man who feels he is superior and may in fact in some ways be superior to others as indeed were some of the Pharisees especially Saul the Pharisee: "... as touching the law, blameless" (Phil. 3.6).

The judgement mentioned here cannot be human judgement in a court of law for Jesus showed his approval of that by using it as an illustration of a sanction against irreconcilables (5.25) and he accepted an oath at his own trial (27.63,64).

In a human court of justice a judge pronounces judgement not because he is perfect himself but according to the principles of the law. Here in Jesus' new law a man is openly forbidden to judge according to the very principle of this new law.

Regarding the motive for refraining from judging, Louis Roussel<sup>1</sup> has a penetrating question: "Est-ce seulement pour éviter <sup>l'</sup>la , le verdict du Dieu, qu'on doit éviter de juger?" We may counter it with another: "Have we attained to that height of piety in which we do not need the threat?" The censure of others to which "holy" people are prone springs from complacency regarding their own state. This complacency needs shock treatment - "some save with fear" - Jude (23) advises out of a good understanding and Matthew does not shrink from instilling fear into his readers from 3.10 to 25.46.

At first sight it is not easy to reconcile the absolute prohibition "judge not" with 16.19, the use of the keys, or 18.15ff., especially 18.17

1 L'Evangile dit de Matthieu, Paris, 1968, Tome 1, p.191.

"let him (the man who will not hear about his fault) be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector". Chrysostom helps. He writes that 7.1,2 does not teach: "...stay not him who is sinning". It teaches: "... be not bitter in pronouncing sentence".<sup>1</sup>

7.6 makes clear that discrimination, which involves an assessment of character, is not only advisable but mandatory. Disciples must judge in this sense to avoid being wiped out by persecutors.<sup>2</sup>

The best way to understand the kind of judging intended by 7.1,2 is in reference to Tholuck's interpretation of calling a brother *pwpē* (5.22) which I found preferable to other interpretations. This would mean that judging here means pronouncing a final verdict. This is not the aim of 7.6 or 18.15ff. It could conceivably be entailed by 16.19, because binding in heaven is mentioned but this is covered by Luther's qualification which prohibits judging "without a commission",<sup>3</sup> that is without a divine commission. In this case that commission had just been granted on the basis of a real confession that Jesus is Christ (16.18) in contrast to a sham confession such as in 7.21. Consideration should also

1 Loc. cit., Hom. XXIII, p.345.

2 Abrahams, op. cit. Series 2, p.196f.: "For dogs Ps.22 is the model".

3 Luther's Works, op. cit., p.213. He writes: "You must understand this (7.1,2) in such a way that it does not take away the right of the man in the public ministry of preaching to judge matters of doctrine as well as of life. Indeed, it is incumbent on him in his office to rebuke publicly whatever does not square with true doctrine, for the very purpose of preventing sects from coming in and taking hold." This he says applies also to: "... any Christian (who) sees his neighbour doing wrong." He has: "... the duty of admonishing him and restraining him which is impossible without judging ...". We must agree with all this except the phrase about sects. Preventing them is not the only purpose or the primary purpose, though the prevention of degeneration of character which is the primary purpose cannot be dissociated from the upsurge of sects.

To elucidate the phrase "without a commission" we may take the principle of what squares with true doctrine and the sentence: "He (Christ) does not want anyone to undertake or do anything on the basis of his own ideas ..." (loc. cit., p.213). With this we might compare the basis of private interpretation outlawed by 2 Pet. 1.20.

18.23-35 does not commend blindness to another's faults.

perhaps be given to the fact that it is things ( *o* ) that Peter is to bind and loose, modes of conduct not people, but this point is weakened by the fact that people's character and conduct cannot be divorced (7.16ff., etc.). In 18.15ff. the object is to warn the offender as is that of the denunciation of 23 passim.

On Tholuck's interpretation 7.3,4 would be a rider to underline the absurdity of a grossly imperfect man setting a much less imperfect man right. Chrysostom may be correct when he writes that judging is forbidden: "...to them that are full of innumerable ills, and are trampling upon other men for trifles. And I think that certain Jews too are here hinted at, for that while they were bitter in accusing their neighbours for small faults, and such as came to nothing, they were themselves insensibly committing deadly sins." He finds support for this in 23.4,23 where certainly the principle of 'light and heavy' is much in evidence.

Rather than completely agree that certain Jews are hinted at, I prefer to see 7.1,2 as primarily a warning to self righteous Christians, in accord with my general plea that the Sermon is addressed primarily to disciples (see the Intro. to this chapter, p.52f). However the self-righteous judgemental Scribe and Pharisee may be the secondary butt of prohibition.

Chrysostom, in the first phrase quoted seems to be implying that only some are "... full of innumerable ills", and that only such are to refrain from judging. This is a result of taking 7.3,4 in a very close association with 7.1,2 which may not be Matthew's intention. Even if it were, a plank in the eye is the most patent hyperbole. Moreover it may be urged that all men have large faults. Was Peter intended because it was he who posed the question in 18.30 and because, second to Judas, he was the most spectacular sinner among the twelve, to be



the only one burdened with an immense load of sin? Surely the parable of the unforgiving debtor (18.33ff.) is intended to be of universal application. Disciples, in general, and a fortiori men, in general, are evil (7.11). In 5.22,28 there is more than a hint that only divine<sup>1</sup> knowledge can judge the heart of man (cf. 1 Sam. 16.17) and it could be that, once the heart is exposed, such a phenomenon as a man with only small faults does not exist.

Luther<sup>2</sup> wants to include judging in matters of doctrine as well as in matters of life and work. But the thrust of the Sermon on the Mount is directed towards individual relationships and even in the case of the false prophet of 7.15 it is not their doctrine which was wrong but their works, as we shall see. So while we may not rule out the possibility of doctrine being involved especially when belief and conduct are so inseparable (see especially 25.24ff.) doctrine is certainly not the primary question here.

We may conclude that the criterion of judgement here is the passing of a final judgement on anyone, or on his character, "without a commission", or more specifically the showing of a bitter and censorious spirit.

1. On the idea that no man can read the heart of his neighbour. in rabbinic writings, see Schuhl, op. cit., No. 75.
2. Luther's Works, (op. cit.) Vol.21, p.213.

7.13,14

I have affirmed (above p. 54) that Matthew teaches divine help to be necessary to obey the Sermon's moral imperatives. This is a suitable juncture at which to point out man's responsibility. On this Moore avers: "That man is capable of choosing between right and wrong and of carrying the decision into action was never questioned ..."<sup>1</sup> It is indeed implicit so often in Matthew that it is scarcely necessary to demonstrate it (e.g. 6.24; 11.20-24; 12.36-42 etc). Man could not justly be blamed for non-repentance, evil speech and other sins if he were not responsible.

However, there is a significant difference between this saying and Luke's partial parallel: Besides "strive ( *αγωνισθετε* ) noted already (Lk. 13.24a), thus accentuating human effort, Luke also diminishes the element of human capacity in (Lk. 13.24b.) "... many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able." Matthew on the other hand assumes that people are able to enter by the simple imperative "enter", though he goes on to say that few find the narrow gate. In the Lucan version of the wise builder we find the same variation in emphasis: In Lk. 6.48, he "... dug deep ..."; in Mt. 7.24, he did no digging but only "... built his house on the rock."

"Enter" means the choice of the kingdom of heaven. In 5.20; 7.21; 18.3; 19.23 the phrase, "... enter the kingdom of heaven" occurs. Life is the equivalent of the latter (18.8; 19.17; 22.12; 23.13; 25.10). As 7.7 also has the word "find" and as 7.7-11 is all of a piece, separated only from 7.13,14 by one verse we may be confident that Matthew is writing on the assumption of God's help in entering by the restricted gate and travelling down the hard way.

The most obvious purport of this gate and this way is obedience to the Golden Rule (7.12), especially since Luke has his parallel (6.31) in a

1 Op. cit., 1.454.

different immediate context, though in the general context of the Sermon on the Plain. Luke's order being that of Q involves the belief that Matthew moved 7.12 to connect it both with 7.7-11 and 7.13,14.

The symbol of the gate is familiar literally as the gate of a city Lk. 7.12; Acts 9.24; Heb. 13.12 or of the temple (Acts 3.10, cf. 4 Esdras 7.7). But gates in Mt. 16.18 mean powers. This is the only other use of the word in Matthew and it is rich in Jewish association. That was where the king and elders sat to give judgement (Deut. 22.15; Ruth 4.1f.; 1 Sam. 9.18; 2 Sam. 19.8 etc.). To interpret as powers would be consistent with Matthew's Jewishness. If we adopt this it would suit well the concept of authoritative teaching in 7.28 and Schweizer's understanding of the gate and the way as "teaching" and "ethical conduct" respectively. Schweizer does however go on to say that it is more likely to be "... a double image, both parts of which have the same meaning (cf., for example, vss. 9-10; 13.31-33)"<sup>1</sup> Bonnard<sup>2</sup> seems to understate the case when he says the narrow way is the one ignored by the many. Why they do not enter is rather because it is narrow.

Austen Farrer holds: "... the narrow way (halacha, interpretation) (to be that) which seeks the particular pleasure of God, not the "broad" way which leaves open to our pleasure as much as the letter will allow."<sup>3</sup>

The idea of openness to our pleasure is stimulating. It is appropriate to those who fail to obey the Sermon and the Golden Rule which covers the whole range of relations with our fellow men. Farrer's phrase is also

1 Op. cit., ad loc.

2 Op. cit., ad loc.

3 St Matthew and St Mark, London, 1954, p.172. The reference to the letter is unsatisfactory. Some of the commands of Jesus in 10.8 were fulfilled by the false prophets on the surface though evidently for the wrong motive, but in much of the Sermon, e.g. 5.22 on anger and 5.28, the implied contrast between letter and spirit is irrelevant. Matthew's object has been to go beyond the sphere in which the letter is meaningful. Moreover the false prophets and disciples do not appear even to have fulfilled the letter of Jesus' teaching on good works (7.15-21,23).

appropriate to some extent to the false prophets and vainly professing disciples of the following verses, though self-glorification might need to be added to pleasure.

The figure of the two ways is familiar and Manson<sup>1</sup> cites several references from the O.T., Jewish literature, rabbinic and classical writings.

Schechter<sup>2</sup> adduces the following references to show that the two ways may mean repentance: Jer.Mak. 31d; Pes.Kah. 158b; Mid.Tan. 25.10; Yalkut Machiri. Matthew has much to say about repentance (3.10; 11.20-24; 12.42 etc.) but it is questionable if he intends it here except that the avoidance of sins mentioned in the Sermon and in the lists which follow below involves repentance.

In the Didache (1.5, probably early second century<sup>3</sup> the two ways are elaborated in a manner which has some affinity with Matthew.<sup>4</sup>

1 Sayings, p.175.

2 Op. cit., p.333.

3 Williston Walker, A History of the Christian Church, Edinburgh, 1919, p.40, dates it c.130-160 A.D., adding that it presents "a survival of very primitive traditions".

Maxwell Staniforth, Early Christian Writings: The Apostolic Fathers, Harmondsworth, Reprinted 1976, p.244 writes: "There is general agreement today that the book (the Didache) is in fact a composite affair, in which materials of an early date have been used by the compiler and touched up with additions and alterations of his own". The date of the final compilation, he says, "is unlikely to have been later than A.D. 150".

4 For example, the way of death is said to include: murders (15.19) adulteries (5.27,28,32; 19.9; 15.19); lusts (5.28); fornications (15.19); thefts (15.19); idolatries (6.24; 19.22ff., implicit); perjuries (15.19); hypocrisies (15.7f.; 23.13, etc.); duplicities (6.22f.?); persecution of good men (5.11f.); lack of pity for the poor, dismissal of the needy (25.42f.). Perhaps most telling of all are some points for which there is less direct parallel in Matthew, e.g. the love of falsehood may be compared with the attitude of the Pharisees in the Beelzebul controversy (12.24ff.); the planning of wickedness with evil thoughts (9.4) and plans (12.14; 22.15; 27.1).

Helmut Köster, Synoptische Überlieferung bei den apostolischen Vätern, Berlin, 1957, discusses parallels and generally comes to the conclusion that they are not quotations but derived from oral tradition. He has no direct reference to these verses in his treatment of the Didache, although he does have a section entitled "Die Beiden Wege" (pp. 160-171). He does, however, mention Mt. 15.19, which contains many of the points which comprise the broad way. The Didache material presumably existed in oral form before being committed to writing. "The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles" would have been a misnomer and would probably have been challenged. Therefore, it seems at least possible that there was a common tradition from which Matthew and the Didache drew.

If Staniforth is correct in seeing the first portion (Chapters 1-6), which is what concerns us here, as "an ancient catechism of the pre-Christian era over which our author has thrown just sufficient Christian colouring to make it usable for the instruction of candidates for baptism",<sup>1</sup> then it is not surprising that it is moralistic. But Matthew's approach is not moralistic like that of the Didache. The narrow way is found. To be able to walk in it is a result of asking (7.7).

Similarly in CR IV there are only two ways. It was perhaps because the Essenes had already specified the component qualities of those who walked in each way that Matthew felt he did not need to do so. In any case he later (15.19) does provide a fairly comprehensive list of sins. It is fairly significant that Matthew has an equivalent for almost every quality mentioned in the DSS.<sup>2</sup>

1 Early Christian Writings: the Apostolic Fathers, trans. Maxwell Staniforth, Harmondsworth, 1968, p. 226.

2 For humility we may see Mt. 5.3,5; 18.3; for charity 6.2 ("when you give alms" - not "if ..."); 10.42 25.31-46; for goodness, 5.48; for understanding, 11.25,27; 13.11a, 16, 17; for patience, 13.32; for discernment, 16.8-12; for zeal, 5.19; for holiness, 5.8; for steadfastness 13.21; for great charity, 19.21; "sell what you possess"; for purity, 5.28; for humble conduct, 15.27; for faithful concealment, 13.13-15.

As regards the other way we find the following referred to or implied in these texts of Matthew: greed; 19.24; slackness in the search of righteousness 5.6; 25.26; wickedness and lies, 12.36; 15.19; 26.59,60; haughtiness and pride, 5.3,5; 11.23,25; 18.3; falseness and deceit 15.19; cruelty and abundant evil temper, 5.22, 23.34; much folly, 7.24-27; brazen insolence 26.68; 27.41,42; abominable deeds committed in a spirit of lust and ways of lewdness in the service of uncleanness, 5.28; a blaspheming tongue, 12.31, 36; blindness of eye and dullness of ear 13.11-13; 15.14; 23.16, 17, 24, 26. Nothing corresponds closely with stiffness of neck and heaviness of heart, but the texts applicable to pride and dullness are probably appropriate.

Matthew records Jesus' saying: "I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance" (9.13) and the accusation against Jesus that He was a friend of taxgatherers and sinners (11.19). The sect in contrast was exclusive. Its avoidance of sinners is illustrated by the Damascus Rule V: "No man shall approach a sinner i.e. one who falls into any of the three nets of Satan" (fornication, idolatry of riches, profanation of the Temple). Fornicators are probably included in the general term "sinners" in 9.13 and 11.19. Indeed in 21.31,32 harlots take their place in the text. In 19.16ff. we read not of Jesus approaching a man who evidently idolized wealth but of the man approaching him. Jesus did not withdraw. Jesus taught, according to Matthew (12.3,4) that David profaned the Bread of the Presence and that a greater thing than the Temple was present when the Kingdom of God came to hand in him, so it is unlikely that Matthew took as serious a view of the last of Satan's nets as did the Sect.

Bonnard writes: "... l'idée essentielle est que la voie qui donne accès à la vie n'est pas celle de tout le monde. Cette voie n'est donc ni une disposition spirituelle au sens dualiste, comme dans l'essenisme ... ni le Christ lui-même comme dans le johannisme" (Jn. 14.6).<sup>1</sup> We may challenge the first statement because it is not only that the majority take the broad way but that the narrow one is restrictive and hard. The denial that Matthew's two ways are the same as those of the Essenes is only partly correct. Matthew is very concerned about spiritual disposition (5.28 etc.) and he is dualistic. The difference between him and the CR lies enshrined in 7.7ff. and this means that he is to some extent in line with Johannine Christology, cf. Mt. 11.27: "... no one knows the Father except the Son ...".

Bonnard's<sup>2</sup> general argument on 7.13,14 that it is not certain that one should interpret the verses in an ethical sense, because Luke has

1 Op. cit., p.103.

2 Loc. cit., p.102.

placed his analogous verses (Lk. 13.23-24) in a quite different context, is weak. It is weak because the entire Sermon on the Mount is strongly ethical. Luke's context has the need for repentance (13.1-4). This is ethical as well as religious. Next comes the barren fig tree (Lk. 13.6-9), which must be ethical. Then Luke has the reaction to the healing of the infirm woman (vv. 10-17), partly ethical, the parables of the mustard seed and heaven which in effect include ethics. Not least we find Luke referring to Jesus' teaching in v.26 and a reference to ἀδικία (v.27) which while different in emphasis from Matthew's ἀνομία (7.23) has an equally strong ethical flavour. All this is to lead to the exclusion of those who have failed to respond to Jesus, particularly the evildoers of Lk. 13.27.

Thus it is hard to see the force of Bonnard's case.

In the two ways we have no new criteria unless Matthew means us to understand what we find in Mark, possibly in John's Epistles and in the oral tradition behind the Didache. In the two gates, two ways, two builders, Matthew intends to emphasize rather the radical nature of decision than the composition of the gates, ways, or houses of the soul. Indecision is really a form of decision. "He who is not with me is against me" (12.30) may be taken as a principle even though it occurs in the context of evident hostility.

Bultmann's general statements are specially apposite to the logia: "Jesus' sayings represent the radical development of the idea that obedience must be absolute."<sup>1</sup> "Man is the being whom God has placed in the position of having to make an existential decision directed towards the future."<sup>2</sup>

The two gates may come first in the text because of their traditionally greater importance. Otherwise one would expect the ways to come first as

1 Quoted by Windisch, op. cit., p.148.

2 Rudolph Bultmann, Jesus and the Word, London, 1962, p.52.

a way generally leads to a gate and not vice versa. Here, if the narrow gate is the gate of the Kingdom of heaven, then we would gain no further criteria by considering the gate separately for the ways lead inexorably to them. This is corroborated by the fact that στενός means simply narrow, lacking room, whereas τεθλιπμένος which is the word applied to 'way' signifies "uneven, encompassed with crags"<sup>1</sup> so that this figure refers to hardship and self-denial. But the former is not devoid of the same sense. It is only less strong.

The interpretation which I suggest is that the narrow gate indeed represents power - the power of God. The wide gate would then be the power of Satan, and the width of this gate is possibly hinted at by the concept of scattering in 12.30 where the idea of dissipation of energy occurs.

The narrow way is the way of obedience to Jesus' moral imperatives. This is confirmed by the close juxtaposition of 7.12 which also sets it in line with the Torah, "the law and the prophets". Such an understanding of the way is confirmed by the Mekilta<sup>2</sup> where in 1.174, Tr. Besh. 1.62 the teaching (Torah) is said to be: "... a light and a way of life". This is an exposition of Ex. 13.18.

The criteria of judgement here are a refusal to avail oneself of God's power and a spurning of the narrow way, cf. Jer. 6.16b: "... we will not walk therein".

1 Tholuck, op. cit., ad loc. p.296.

2 The importance of the Mekilta for the N.T. is referred to in Appendix A. Mek. 1.248, Tr. Besh. 7.74ff. takes the two ways offered by God in Gen. 3.22 to be "...the way of life and the way of death".



7.15-20

7.15-20 is relevant to judgement because it contains a threat in v.19 which takes up the Baptist's cry of 3.10 and because of the words "... depart from me ..." in v.23. Moreover, there is an obvious implication in 7.21 that some will face adverse judgement. In v.22, "... in that day" is the day of judgement according to Manson<sup>1</sup>, who cites Is. 2.11,17; Zech.14.6. One can scarcely disagree with this especially in view of the mention of entry to the Kingdom of heaven in the previous verse and of what we shall observe about the meaning of wind and storm in vv. 24-27.

7.12-23 is mostly editorial work by Matthew, 7.15-17 being peculiar to him; Lk. 6.43-47 having a better parallel in Mt. 12.53-55. Lk. 13.26-27 has been rewritten by Matthew to fit the situation where false Christians have been prophesying in a verbally orthodox fashion and working wonders (7.22,23).<sup>2</sup> A flock of sheep represents the community of God's people (Num. 27.17; Ps. 100.3; Mt. 9.36; 10.16; 18.12-14); wolves stand for the heathen (Jer. 5.6) or the apostate leaders of Israel and the false prophets (Ezek. 22.27f.; Zeph. 3.3f.), or the enemies of the Christian community (Mt. 10.16; Acts 20.29). Prophets wore clothes of skin (2 Kings 1.8; Zech. 13.4).

Luther says that false prophets: "... are preachers and teachers who boast of the fact that they have no other title or reputation than this, that they have the very same office of the ministry, the same Scriptures and the same God as the others ... They have the valid office."<sup>3</sup>

1 Sayings, p.177, cf. also "the day of the Lord"(Amos. 5.18; Joel 2.1), and "the day", (Mal. 3.19).

2 Luke by contrast has these people say: "... we ate and drank in your presence and you taught in our streets" (Lk. 13.26) which indicates that the speakers were on the scene of Jesus' earthly ministry. Of 7.16a,20 Schweizer rightly observes: "... these verses were composed by Matthew himself albeit modelled on the saying in Q = Lk. 6.44 " (op. cit., ad loc.).

3 Op. cit., p.250f.

Sheep's clothing, he adds, means that: "... they are irreproachable and outwardly indistinguishable from genuine preachers."<sup>1</sup> In other words, we may put it that they are camouflaged like the whitewashed sepulchres of 23.27 or Satan as an angel of light (2 Cor. 11.3,14; Ass. of Moses,17).

So far Luther is quite in order but he proceeds with a vehement attack on monks<sup>2</sup> which is out of place today and illustrates the same sort of thing that we find wrong with Via's<sup>3</sup> interpretation of the parables, namely that it ignores or departs from the historical situation in which Matthew was writing. The important thing about the sheep's clothing is that it signifies membership of the community.

Luther goes on to deal with the word ravenous. He says it means that they aimed to destroy souls and tear them up, that is "inwardly to tear up the faith and chief doctrine about Christ."<sup>4</sup> But this interpretation applies rather to the false prophets of Mt. 24.3,24 who are coupled with false Christs. The emphasis here in 7.15 is on works - you will know them by their fruits (7.16a). 7.15 is peculiar to Matthew and he seems to have adapted Lk. 6.44a. "... each tree is known by its own fruit" to apply it to the false prophets in Mt. 7.16a. with the specific design of elucidating his point that it is by works as distinct from doctrine that these false prophets are to be recognized.<sup>5</sup>

1 Loc. cit., p.251.

2 Loc. cit., p.253f.

3 Dan Otto Via, Jr., The Parables: Their Literary and Existential Dimension, Philadelphia, 1967. See p.224 below.

4 Loc. cit., p.257.

5 This matter is well expressed by Légasse when he asks whether the message ought to be included in the fruits or works: "Sans doute les textes parallèles de Mt.12.33-34 et Lc. 6.43-45 appliquent les mêmes données aux paraboles, comparées aux fruits de l'arbre. Mais il est assurément plus sage de recourir au contexte immédiat, soit à la pericope suivante (7.21-23), étroitement liée à celle qui nous occupe et où règne un contraste entre propos et actes. Les premiers font donc partie, au plus sûr, des apparences favorables dont se pare le faux prophète. Pour cette raison, on n'assimilera pas facilement celui-ci aux doctrinaires hérétiques dont les épîtres du Nouveau Testament combattent les ravages. Mais, si les discours peuvent être irréprochables, le mandat n'en est pas moins inexistant ... l'on devra examiner toute prophétie à la lumière des actes du prophète: le futur vous les reconnaîtrez (vv. 16a 20) ..." S. Légasse, "Les Faux Prophètes" Mt. 7.15-20 Etudes Françaises, 18 (47,68, 205-218), p.215.

In 7.15 the false prophets have already appeared ἐρχονται. In 24.24 they are yet to come, ἐγερθῶσονται.

These false prophets are rapacious like those of Ezek. 22.27; Zeph. 3.3. Légasse<sup>1</sup> sees in the word ravenous more than rapacity - cupidity. He compares the description with the Didache (11.6-12) where Christians are taught to recognise an impostor by whether he asks for money (cf. Hermas Mand. 9.11). If this is correct then we may see the false prophets of 7.15 as an earlier wave of those who troubled the church later. The only objection to this additional meaning is that if Matthew had wanted to press it one might suppose that he would have placed 7.15ff. closer to 6.24, though he could not have put it in close proximity without breaking the flow of thought from service to God to trust in God.

Luther has a valuable description of the fig and the vine and how they contrast with some other trees. The former is: "... unpretentious; it does not strut or brag about its fruit and leaves. It does not sprout any leaves until the fruit is ready." The latter is: "... just a dry and weak stick. Yet it yields grapes that are sweeter than anything else that grows, while other trees spread themselves and strut with their leaves and flowers ... but all they produce is sour and useless fruit..."

These people (those who boast of their wonderful works) put on a fine outward appearance ... But when the blossoms have fallen there is nothing left but a hawthorn full of stones, useless for nourishment or food, or thistleheads which just prick and scratch if you take hold of them."<sup>2</sup>

This brings out the theme of the ostentatious nature of the bad trees (cf. 21.19 when the fig tree had nothing but leaves, especially significant in that the fruit ought to have come first).<sup>3</sup>

1 Ibid.

2 Loc cit., p.264.

3 On the fig-tree's fruit coming normally before the leaves, see The Encyclopaedia Judaica, Vol. 6, p.1273 and cf. W.M. Thomson, The Land and the Book, London: Edinburgh: Dublin: New York, 1913, p.333.

7.21-23

False prophets are known not by outward appearance for "they wear a rough" (sheepskin or camel-hair) "garment to deceive" (Zech. 13.4), but by their works. It is evident that they will be judged on the same basis not only deducible from what we note on v.24, but owing to the plain statement that every tree which produces bad fruit will be thrown into the fire (v.19). Thorns and thistles do not attempt to delude. No one is hoodwinked into believing that grapes or figs may be gathered from them. This saying may not belong here but, if it does, it is a strong statement of the obvious impossibility of obtaining good results from bad characters. Thorns tear at clothing and skin and may well be symbols of divisiveness as Augustine saw: "quaerimus fructus caritatis, invenimus spinas dissentionis".<sup>1</sup> Augustine cannot have been supposing that anyone but an imbecile would look for good fruit from a thorn bush. Possibly we are intended to imagine the thorns to be somehow hidden. Anyhow much more germane to the sheep's clothing of the false prophets is the next saying about the good and bad tree. The connection between inner disposition and good works is heavily stressed by Matthew who repeats the tree parable in 12.33ff. Black suggests that the translator of the Aramaic original in 12.33 has failed to recognize and understand the Aramaic idiom. The translation should read: "Either make the tree good then its fruit will be good ..."<sup>2</sup> This is such an eminently sensible suggestion that one could hardly reject it unless one ventured to disagree with Black on Aramaic idiom, which would be rash.

The result makes good sense and it underlines a theme that runs right through Matthew, namely that of attitude and inwardness. If the tree is inwardly good then its fruit will be good. The nature of the fruit cannot be separated from the nature of the tree. The kind of tree is not specified and this paradoxically may be better calculated to depict the specifically fraudulent character of these prophets. The nature of the

1 "Enarr. in Ps." (149,2) quoted by Tholuck, op. cit., ad loc.

2 AAGA, p.202f.

tree may not manifest itself till the fruit appears.<sup>1</sup> Thus, though thorns and thistles are a stronger statement of the viciousness of the false prophets, the nondescript trees are a better, more specific symbol of their deceptiveness.

Anyhow the bamboozlement of the disciple is only temporary, for rapacity soon strips off the mask and reveals the prophets to be wolves. The specific nature of the bad fruit may be found by reference to Ezekiel and Zephaniah, texts which were no doubt in Matthew's mind. Ezek. 22.27f. says the prophets are "like wolves tearing the prey, shedding blood, destroying lives to get dishonest gain". They whitewash evil, "seeing false visions and divining lies". Zeph. 3.4 says that the existing prophets are "wanton faithless men". The word wanton is from the root pachaz meaning to bubble up. Hence there may be a connection with the frothy protestations of false disciples and prophets in Mt. 7.22.

The common Apostolic description of false prophets shortly before and after Matthew wrote may be gathered from 1 John 1.12; Acts 20.29; Didache 11.6,12. They are greedy, thieving, ferocious, murderous (cf. Ezek. 22.27).

Manson writes of 7.21 that it is a "moralized" version of Lk. 6.46. "Entry", he says, "into the Kingdom is obtained by doing God's will, that is by 'works of the Law' even if we grant that it is by works of the new Law rather than the old." In the same connection he notes the difference between Luke's adikia (13.27) and Matthew's anomia (7.23).<sup>2</sup> While it is true that "the Lucan version links up better with what precedes and what follows"<sup>3</sup>, i.e. the tree parable and the two builders, Matthew does not place it out of these contexts but only in less immediate contexts. "... why do you call me, Lord, Lord and not do what I tell you?" (Lk. 6.46) is not appreciably different, as a moral challenge, from Mt. 7.21. It seems that

1. Cf. 13.26: "... when the plants came up and bore grain then appeared the darnel also." Wheat and darnel were similar in the early stages, but the grain quite different - wheat, wholesome; darnel, toxic.

2. Sayings, p.176.

3. Loc. cit., p.177.

Manson wants to show that Matthew is here anti-Pauline (cf. Rom. 10.9) and his real contrast is not between Matthew and Luke, but between Matthew and Paul. Matthew certainly stresses the theme of judgement by implication but Luke also has it in the following parable.

As Manson says: "... the passage is in striking contrast to Mk. 9.38-41."<sup>1</sup> Jesus replied to the disciples' objections to one casting out demons in Jesus' name: "Do not forbid him for no one who does a mighty work in my name will be able soon after to speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is for us." Manson is right, but the contrast is probably due to the fact that Mark's exorcist had not yet reached the stage of final decisions. This is hinted at by his use of the pronoun in the first person plural. This man regarded Jesus as the leader of a successful band of exorcists. Even Pharaoh's magician knew that the plague of gnats was "the finger of God". (Ex. 8.19). Cranfield finds the solution to "the apparent contradiction between Mk. 9.40 = Lk. 9.50 and Mt. 12.30 = Lk. 11.23 by relating these sayings to the messianic veiledness of Jesus."<sup>2</sup> By contrasting Mk. 9.40 and Mt. 12.30, he skilfully brings out the force of the latter: "... to be neutral towards Jesus is to have decided against him."

One of the nearest approximations to the type of false prophets described in 7.22 ; 23 is that of Balaam (Num. 22 ; 23 ; 24) for though he

1 Op. cit., p.177.

2 The Gospel according to St Mark, Cambridge, 1963, ad loc. What he writes is relevant to our understanding not only of 12.22ff. but of 7.22,23. He continues: "Jesus avoided forcing men precipitously into a position in which they had to make a final decision about him and used delayed-action methods of teaching in order to give them as much time as possible in which to decide. So long as the critical point has not been reached the principle of Mk. 9.40 holds, and the attitude of the disciple toward those who have not yet decided is to be that of recognizing in the unbeliever of today the possible believer of tomorrow ... On the other hand when the critical moment comes and the decisions have to be made, it is the principle of Mt. 12.30 that holds ... and this must be part of the Church's preaching both to those without and to those within."

The situation in Mk. 9 may be comparable to that of Num. 11.26-29 where Moses refused to be made jealous of others who were prophesying.

declined to curse Israel verbally he became in effect a wolf in sheep's clothing. It was presumably he who put the plan of luring the Israelites into eating food sacrificed to idols and into fornication with the Moabite women into the mind of Balaak (Num. 25.1ff.). This is stated in Rev. 2.14 and the motive is given in 2 Pet. 2.15: "... he loved gain from wrongdoing ..." and Jude 11: "... for the sake of gain."

It is perhaps significant that Balaam referred to God as Jahweh, (Num. 23.8,12,26), the name which was uniquely<sup>1</sup> Israelite, the name given to Moses (Ex. 3.15), but this name may have been put in his mouth by the author.

7.21-23 is not really separable from 7.15-20. It generalizes the warnings about false prophets to cover false disciples. It also mentions words i.e. prophesying in Jesus' name, which, because orthodox, should not be included along with deeds under "fruit". No objection is made to "Lord, Lord" in itself. The point is simply that correct creeds are no substitute for obedience. Wonderful works and exorcisms, moreover, are no substitute for good works. Charismata can be done by impure persons using the name of Jesus as a magic spell. In the case of the sons of Sceva the attempt ended in discomfiture (Acts 19.11ff.).

The principle behind Matthew's warning was needed even for St Paul (1 Cor. 9.27), who was led to redoubled efforts at self-discipline, lest his practice failed to match his profession. It was also needed in view of the menace of false prophets and Messiahs arising from the Qumran community and possibly from the Gnostics.<sup>2</sup> Davies<sup>3</sup> is correct in seeing

1 For this see G.R. Driver, "The Original Form of the Tetragrammaton" Old Testament Essays No. II, Oxford, 1927, pp. 18-24. On p.24 he observes that: "... the form YHWH is never found outside the Old Testament except in one or possibly two inscriptions."

2 Despite the antimonianism of some Gnostics which would fit with a prominent feature of the false prophets, W.D. Davies is unwilling to entertain the possibility that Gnostics are here intended. He observes that Benoit has compared this section of Matthew with 1 Cor. 13 "But it is significant that there is no reference to the knowledge which puffeth up in Matthew ..." He also points out that Matthew emphasizes the eschatological nature of the phenomenon of false prophets by the use of ἐν ἐσχάτῳ ἡ γάρρῃ. Davies, however, appears to ignore the historical evidence of false prophets in the early church and the possibility of realized eschatology applying here. (SSM, p.203f.)

3 The Sermon on the Mount, p.72.

integrity as an acute problem in leadership (perhaps the classic modern example is Rasputin). Vacillating Peter is rock-like because of his essential integrity.

Iniquity ( *ἀνομία* v.23) sums up the criterion by which false prophets and false disciples are judged. As the word implies, these people are antinomian. G. Barth argues cogently that the false prophets are "clearly designated antinomians".<sup>1</sup> He compares Mt. 7.21 with Lk. 6.46 where he says Luke's version is more original and Matthew has shewn his actual concern by editing "and (not) do what I tell you" to read "... he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven". Barth also compares Mt. 7.22f. with Lk. 13.26f, the difference in which we have already noted.

"The series of exhortations to do God's will", continues Barth, "which begin in 7.13 is concluded in 7.24-27. In 5.17ff. and 7.15ff. Matthew has put the entire Sermon on the Mount in brackets, which are clearly directed against the antinomians ...". *Ἀνομία* occurs again in 24.12 where it is connected with lack of love, from which the false prophets certainly suffered.

In regard to charismata done from the wrong motive and arising from uncommitted people the Westminster Confession gives the principle: "... the works of unregenerate men ... are sinful and cannot please God."<sup>2</sup> From the Jewish and other writings mentioned above we may assume that these were done for vainglory or for financial gain. Thereby the Lord does not know them. They are in no way connected with him, despite their verbal protestations. They are excluded from his presence and therefore from the Kingdom, for he is the Kingdom (3.2; 4.17).

Lack of knowledge here is lack of divine approval (cf. Ex. 33.17; Nah. 1.7). God's approval depends upon that of the Son: "No man knows the Father except the Son and to whomever the Son will reveal him", 11.27b.

1 Op. cit., p.74.

2 The Confession of Faith, London and Edinburgh, 1963, Chap. XVI, "Of Good Works", Sec. VII.



Though this represents man's knowledge of God, we may assume it to be mutual. Moses obeyed God, found favour with him and spoke with him "mouth to mouth"; God knew him by name. Nahum says "God knows them that take refuge in Him." Unlike Moses and those of whom Nahum spoke these wonderworkers had no real and private converse with God. Like the foolish bridesmaids 25.1-13 their discipleship was superficial. A further connection with 25.1-13 occurs in the next section, the two classes wise and foolish.

#### 7.24-28

To Luke's "my sayings" Matthew adds "these" indicating the entire Sermon. Rain and wind represent the fury (judgement) of God as we see in Is. 29.6; Ezek. 13.10-16 and in Sir. 22.16-18. The elements destroy all that cannot stand before God<sup>1</sup>. Matthew uses the same thought about the Flood in 24.37-39. When he wants to talk of persecution he employs the symbol of the sun (13.6,20,21). Both wise and foolish builders hear Jesus' words. The crux is action. Once again there is no third category, in this case of a man whose house partly stood and partly collapsed.

In 1 Cor. 3.11 Paul makes the foundation to be Christ's death and resurrection. Matthew thinks rather of the teachings of Jesus, but we have seen these cannot be divorced from his life. Paul evidently did not suppose that the Good News should stand apart from moral doctrine nor that the love command needed no augmenting, for he devoted much of his writing to ethics. (See Appendix C).

It is a fair inference that Matthew implicitly agrees with the writer to the Hebrews (Heb. 10.29) that if people were punished for disobeying the O.T. law, they will be more severely punished for disobeying the Lord. Our criterion at this point is rejection of Jesus morally conditioned by

1 See J. Jeremias, PJ, p.194.

unwillingness to do his sayings. This is specially blameworthy because the people recognized that he taught with authority (v.28), in contrast to the scribes whose teaching was second-hand or worse, uninspired and unoriginal. This verse seems to contradict 23.3 and may do so unless we take it to be ironic or take it that sometimes the scribes do sit in Moses' seat, i.e. have immediate contact with God, "mouth-to-mouth" (Num. 12.8) (See on 23.3, below).

From this survey of the Sermon and the preceding section on faith we may claim to have established the fact that there is more than one criterion of judgement in Matthew. Augustine<sup>1</sup> relates scornfully that carnal expounders of the Bible deduced from 25.34,35 that almsgiving was the sole criterion of salvation.

N.H.G. Robinson's statement on the demands of Christ is applicable in principle to the criteria of judgement in Matthew:

"The demand of the present situation is always much fuller than 'the principle of love' would lead us to expect. It is certainly true that the Christian life is a life of love, but it is equally the case that this is not the whole truth of the matter."<sup>2</sup>

A study of the Sermon should at least persuade those who insist on one criterion that love has backbone as well as heart. It is abundantly plain that while love to God and neighbour are the great commandments, they are not the only commandments. More fully than Luke, Matthew has recorded principles of conduct broader and deeper than the Torah. The love command must be set within a context of other ethical precepts which prevent it from degenerating into vague, undisciplined, uninformed and so ineffective benevolence. For Matthew the way that leads to life is narrow. The love command by itself is too unspecific to define the margins of that way.

1 De Civitate Dei , XXXI. c.22.

2 "The Place of Vocation in Christian Ethics" Theology, May 1950, p.172.

The criterion of judgement in 7.24-27 is self-evident: disobedience to the words of Jesus, despite having heard them. At this point it is noticeable that Matthew, in rewriting Lk. 13.24ff. misses the matter of Jesus teaching in the hearers' streets (Lk. 13.26) and so makes the whole passage from 7.18 onwards less cohesive. However, the criterion of judgement is nonetheless sufficiently plain. It includes besides (v. 28) the disobedience to authoritative teaching.

## CHAPTER 3

8.11, 12

Cox is almost certainly correct when he writes of the centurion's attitude to Jesus (which provides the context, 8.5-10, of this saying): "Jesus' deeds partake of the creative activity of God who made and rules the world by the word of his mouth (cf. Ps. 33.6 and 9)."<sup>1</sup> But Cox could have chosen an even more apposite text, Ps. 107.20: "He (God) sent his word and healed them." Also, and in regard to the fact that the centurion did not feel that Jesus needed to be present at the sick-bed, Ps. 30.2 may be appropriate: "O Lord my God I cried to thee for help and thou hast healed me." The reason we may be fairly confident that the centurion had prior knowledge of the power of God's word is that in the Lucan parallel (Lk. 7.1-10) Luke records that the Jewish elders who brought the message said: "... he loves our nation and has built us a synagogue." (Lk. 7.5).<sup>2</sup> A Gentile who had built a synagogue must have believed in the reading and teaching of the word of God and presumably knew much of it.

The importance of the story of the centurion for Matthew does not lie in the miraculous cure, for Manson<sup>3</sup> recounts a cure by R. Haninah ben Dosa (c. 70 A.D.) which is strikingly similar. The patient, however, was not a Gentile, but R. Gamaliel. This story was probably known to Matthew. The importance lies in the missionary setting.

The centurion saw a likeness between Jesus and himself in that both were "under authority". Note the word also<sup>4</sup> in: "I also am a man under authority." This word is lacking from Luke's parallel (7.7b.) and so

1 G. E. P. Cox, The Gospel According to St Matthew, London, 1952, ad loc.

2 Matthew may have left this out (a) because he was carrying out a polemic against Jews; (b) because he saw it was inconsistent with v.10b.; but (c), connected with (a), supremely because he wanted to portray a man without any Jewish privileges entering the Kingdom.

3 Sayings, p.65.

4 The R.S.V. unaccountably fails to translate the *Kde* in v.9. It must mean 'also' or 'too' (see Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich p.394, §11.1.)

reveals Matthew's emphasis. This authority must, in the context of his issuing commands which were obeyed, be delegated authority. Manson<sup>1</sup> observes that the Aramaic *tehōth* means both 'under' and 'in place of'. We might paraphrase: "I am Caesar's representative; you are God's." Matthew is evidently more keen than Luke (7.7b.) to show the man's faith in the word for he inserts (Manson<sup>2</sup> says editorially) 'only' - "speak the word only ..." (8.8). Thus the centurion emerges as a man of massive faith in the word of Jesus which he regards as equivalent to the word of God. His faith makes him a prototype of those who: "... come from East and West ..." On the other hand those who ought to have had this faith: "... will be thrown into outer darkness", a phrase peculiar to Matthew (cf. 22.13; 25.30) meaning as Fenton says: "hell".<sup>3</sup> The weeping and gnashing of teeth are also typically Matthaean (13.42,50; 22.13; 24.51; 25.30) though it does occur once in Lk. 13.28 (Luke's parallel to 8.12) and indicates remorse and frustration. Altogether the contrast between this Gentile and the Jews who lack faith in Jesus could hardly be more strong. Those who are unheeding of the word of God in Jesus, and this is the criterion of judgement here, will despite their privileges of birth be consigned to the worst state of wretchedness.

1 Sayings, p.65.

2 Loc. cit., p.64.

3 Saint Matthew, ad loc.

10.14, 15, 33

It is evident that to shake the dust off one's feet<sup>1</sup> meant to sever communication<sup>2</sup> (cf. Neh. 5.13; Acts 13.51; 18.6). Rejection of the messengers was to be followed by their rejecting even the dust of the unresponsive place.

The mission is evidently a holy<sup>3</sup> mission from which unholy people and everything connected with them are to be dissociated.

To reject Jesus' emissaries is the same as to reject Jesus and to reject him is the same as to reject God. This may be inferred by applying the converse of Mt. 10.40.<sup>4</sup> It is implicit in 10.25b (cf. 25.45 on the negative side though referring to neglect rather than rejection). This probably compensates for the omission of Lk. 10.16b. In the light of the context the criterion of judgement then is refusal to receive the twelve or hear their words of peace<sup>5</sup> in spite of their mission: the Kingdom of heaven is at hand, their healings and their venture of faith without payment etc. (10.7ff.). Matthew has moralized 10.13 by the word "worthy" instead of "son of peace" (Lk. 10.6) and the phrase "not worthy".

- 1 J. Jeremias (N.T. Theol., Vol.1, p.238) says that it is "an abbreviated expression", meaning "to shake the dust which their feet have stirred up from their cloaks... nothing of such a town or locality is to cling to the messengers, even the dust from its streets. The place is delivered over to God's judgement." so the rejection is complete. McNeile (op. cit., ad loc) notes: "They (the disciples) were to treat the unworthy householder as though he were a Gentile."
- 2 In Lk. 10.11 the emphasis lies rather in the bearing of testimony, because: "... against you, nevertheless know this that the kingdom of God has come near to you" is omitted by Matthew. This is the more evident because Luke uses the same phrase (lacking the first three words) in 10.9.
- 3 The Mishnah (Ber. 9.5) prohibits a man from entering Mt. Zion with dust on his feet.
- 4 In Luke, this is explicit (Lk. 10.16) where the woes on Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum (in addition to Lk. 10.6ff.) are covered by it (Lk. 10.13-15 par Mt. 11.20-24). Lk. 10.16b. has: "He who rejects you rejects me and he who rejects me rejects Him that sent me."
- 5 Luke's "son of peace" (10.6) is more primitive and so more Hebraic than Matthew's "worthy" cf. Lk. 10.12 which accentuates judgement. The addition of Gomorrah enlarges its scope and brings it into line with Gen.18, though in 11.24 Matthew follows Q and does not add Gomorrah.

The haughty, luxury-loving cities of the plain, opulent<sup>1</sup> and complacent had, among their many sins,<sup>2</sup> one which linked them with the goats in 25.31-46, that is, they: "... did not aid the poor and needy" (Ezek. 16.49). This sin is of enormous significance because it associates the sin of omitting deeds of mercy with that of disbelieving in Jesus' missionaries. The latter is closely connected to the rejection of Jesus himself. It may be confidently affirmed that these matters are among the cardinal criteria of judgement in Matthew, because they are so often alluded to, frequently in contexts of horrendous judgement.

Matthew probably (13.52) knew the rabbinic view of Sodom later incorporated in the Mishnah: "... the men of Sodom were ... sinners in the world to come", (Sanh. 10.3) i.e. sure of punishment. What is the fate worse than an assured eternal punishment? The reader must be intended to understand that for Matthew's Jesus the awfulness of the fate of those who reject Jesus' disciples shows the immense importance he attached to the disciples' mission. It is a fate comparable to that threatened against those who offend one of the "little ones" (18.6); or that addressed to the betrayer of Jesus (26.24); or to that of the cursed (25.45). Perhaps most significantly of all, it is a fate almost identical with the fate of those who did not repent after experiencing Jesus' mighty works (11.24). This makes still another bond between Jesus and disciples in the context of judgement. Thus, the criterion of the last judgement here is rejection of the disciples and this is akin to, though more active than, keeping one's life, failing to erase one's ego. It is a criterion of final judgement, because it refers to loss of life =  $\psi\chi\eta$ , and this kind of life can only be destroyed by God (v.28). In 16.26, following a repetition of the saying about loss and gain, the reason for sacrificing one's life is elaborated. It is evidently of more value than the whole world. This

1 The wealth of Sodom and Gomorrah is pictured as a fertile garden in Gen. 13.10.

2 In Ezek. 16.49 reference is made besides to pride, "surfeit of food and prosperous ease". In Ezek. 16.47 they are abominable and corrupt; v.50 adds the charge of haughtiness.

teaching of Jesus has been preceded by his own example in 4.8-10 where he made his own statement incarnate by refusal of all the kingdoms of the world. To lose the kind of life spoken of here is due to lack of a radical surrender which may be taken as the criterion of judgement.

Clearly 10.32,33 envisage final judgement<sup>1</sup> with Jesus as the advocate for the defence refusing to speak on behalf of those who had denied him.

10.33, the denial of Jesus and its dire consequence might make it look as if no distinction can be made between Jesus' person and the Spirit of God in Jesus (12.32) but in 10.33 Matthew does not refer to Jesus as the Son of Man whereas in 12.32 he does. This strengthens the case for taking the Son of Man as a neutral designation. It tends to weaken the case for the Son of Man as a description of the Remnant<sup>2</sup> because in 10.1ff. Jesus has sent out the twelve and if Matthew had wanted to impose a communal meaning on the Son of Man it would have been an ideal place to put it. Instead, in the context of the persecution of disciples, he calls himself simply *pe* and apparently wants to bolster their resolve to be bold for him as an individual by promise (10.32) and threat (10.33). Denial may well here mean ultimate<sup>3</sup> apostasy, refusal to accept martyrdom (10.28), though it ought not to be sought (10.23).

Peter's denial differs from the denial in 10.33 because he denied Jesus prior to the Resurrection before the authority of Jesus was unleashed (28.18-20). 10.33 must be written from a standpoint after the Resurrection,

1 McNeile, op.cit., ad loc writes: "'Before men' and 'before my Father' refers to courts of judgement, human (cf. 1 Tim. VI.12) and divine." Peter's denial (26.69-75) did not take place in a court of judgement (though it was close) where he had had time to think.

2 Manson, Sayings, p.109.

3 cf. 27.60ff., a temporary lapse, for which bitter tears (26.75, par. Lk. 22.62) indicated a sincere repentance, the death of Jesus brought forgiveness (26.27) and the resurrection presumably acquittal (28.16ff.).



because, although 10.1-16 evidently contains instructions for the time of Jesus' earthly ministry, 10.17ff. can probably only apply to a time when Apostles and disciples were persecuted (cf. Acts 3; 4; 8; etc.). There is no evidence of their persecution during Jesus' ministry, though the possibility should be left open.

### Additional Note on Sodom

Sodom (with Gomorrah in Mt. 10.15) is mentioned several times in the Mekilta (1.54,192; 2.15,40,156 bis). This is not very important in regard to Matthew's Jewishness for though he has two references to it 10.15 (par. Lk. 10.12) and 11.23,24 which is peculiar to him, Luke also has a reference peculiar to him (Lk. 17.29). However, Mek. p.40 (Tr. Shir. 5.50f.) could be significant for it reads: "Thou didst not definitely decree destruction upon them (Sodom and Gomorrah) until they had displayed their utmost wickedness before Thee." This is indeed Jewish, (cf. Gen. 15.16, where the reason given for the delay in Israel's entry into Canaan is that "... the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full"), and is reflected in Matthew in the parable of the weeds in the phrase "let both grow together till the harvest" (13.30). In Matthew the fact that wheat and darnel were inextricably mixed is the main point in the delay but ripeness in evil is an element in it. (See 13.26 where only when the plants "bore grain" were they distinguishable.

The Mekilta (2.15) draws attention to Ezek. 16.49 as descriptive of the sin of Sodom.

It is strange that the Pirke Aboth (5.12) takes a rather mild view of the sins of Sodom: "He who says, 'Mine is mine and thine is thine', that is the moderate type - some say it is the Sodom type of character." (This saying is anonymous, see Oesterley op.cit., p.60n. 9 and p.x). Matthew's view is rather that of the O.T. and other rabbinic writings. The unmercifulness, cruelty and injustice of the Sodomites is shown by references in Sanh. 109b (Son. p.749ff.).

Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi said: "There was no city more wicked than Sodom: when a man was evil he was called a Sodomite." (Midrash on Gen.XLI.7 Freedman, p.338 ).

Burning was the punishment meted out by the Sodomites to a girl who had given charity (Midrash on Gen.XLIX.6, Freedman p.425). This tale has several targumic versions to which M.J. Mulder, Het Meisje van Sodom, Kampen, 1970, pp.7ff. refers. In two of them God is said to have heard "her cry", that is the outcry of the donor of charity. This could be a significant comparison with Mt. 18.6. In the sense of the value of each wretched individual it could also be important for understanding the word 'one' in Mt. 25.40,45, incidentally adding to the evidence of Matthew's Jewishness.

11.20-24

"Woe to you" is here a warning of final judgement because the day of judgement is twice designated (vv. 22,24) and Hades is to be the destination of Capernaum.<sup>1</sup>

Tyre and Sidon, the former the home of Jezebel, had become types of those who had defied God. Ezekiel accuses Tyre of being avaricious, covetous, aggressive and skilful in the pursuit of wealth, not merely unconcerned at the fall of Jerusalem, but gleeful that Tyre would be able to appropriate what belonged to Jerusalem. Personified in her prince Tyre was proud of her position as an island fortress and proud of her wealth and beauty. The prince considered himself a god, wise as a god. Tyre was also charged with violence, unrighteousness in trade and profanation of her sanctuaries (Ezek. 26.2; 28.2; 5,16,17,18).<sup>2</sup> In Amos 1.9 she is blamed for contempt of the rights of man and in Joel (3.4-6) for slave trading.

Of Sidon's sins we know less as though the mother city, she was subordinate to Tyre for most of the period of significance for us. Sidon may be assumed to have shared the ethos of Tyre. Along with other neighbours of Israel, Sidon was like a brier or thorn to Israel and treated her with contempt (Ezek. 28.24).

- 1 23.32 is possibly stronger than 11.23 for it threatens Gehenna whereas 11.23 warns of Hades. There may not be a sharp distinction between the two for, though Gehenna, the place of torment, is generally considered to be a department within Hades, Hades can also be a place of torment (cf. Luke 11.23). As there is only one other instance of Hades in Matthew (16.18), where it means death, we have little with which to define the distinction though in the six other uses of Gehenna in Matthew (besides 23.32) it is always of a place of punishment. Matthew probably used it here because of his allusion to Is. 14.13-15 which refers to Sheol for which Hades is an equivalent.

For sexual sin arising out of the form of worship, see above pp. 17,18. For a discussion of the Tyrian Baal see William Foxwell Albright, Archaeology and the Religion of Israel, Fifth Edition, Baltimore, 1968, p.157.

- 2 Some of these points have emerged already in considering the provenance of Matthew, see above p. 13ff.

Sodom was a synonym for wickedness (Is. 1.9f.), famed for its prosperity and greed, its lust and sodomy (Gen. 18-19); (Jude 7; Rev.11.8). It was moreover a city which "proclaimed its sin" (Is. 3.9) that is it was shameless (cf. Jer. 6.15; 8.12 and cf. one of the works of the flesh, shameless wantonness, *αἰσχρυνία*, Gal. 5.19, debarring those who did it from the kingdom of God).

Jesus' audience must have known of the sins of the ancient cities and of the severe judgements<sup>1</sup> visited on them. Matthew sees no need to specify more than the bare names. It is not expecting too much of informed readers to picture the final judgement<sup>2</sup> of those cities as correspondingly horrendous.

- 1 Though she withstood a thirteen year siege by Nebuchadrezzar, the fate of Tyre was to be "no more for ever" (Ezek. 28.19), "a place to spread nets upon" (Ezek. 26.14). The latter actually came true when in 332 B.C. Alexander the Great razed old Tyre and with the rubble built a mole two hundred feet wide out to the island fortress of New Tyre. Eventually the island was stormed and completely demolished so that in the words of G.A. Frank Knight: "... only a blunt headland today suggests the existence of the former island fortress ... 8,000 of her inhabitants were massacred, 2,000 executed and 30,000 sold into slavery." (Dictionary of the Bible, ed. James Hastings, Edinburgh, 1909, p.953. See also Encyclopaedia Britannica, ed. Walter Yust, Chicago: London: Toronto, 1947, Vol. 22, p.653.)

Sidon was utterly destroyed by Esarhaddon and swiftly submitted to Nebuchadrezzar owing to devastation by pestilence. She never regained her former glory after being crushed by Artaxerxes Ochus about 351 B.C. when according to Knight she: "... disappeared in flame and torrents of blood" (D.B. p.953). See also W. Ewing, "Zidon", D.B. p.989f.; Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. 20, p.618f.

Sodom was annihilated, buried presumably in a torrent of lava (Gen. 19.24,25). It became a type of the total destruction of wickedness (Rom. 9.29; 2 Pet. 2.6).

For archaeological evidence of the destruction of Sodom see D.E. Hart-Davies, The Severity of God, London, 1942, pp.31-34.

- 2 Regarding the relation between physical death as a punishment and final judgement, see above p. 87f. Suffice it to say here that some sinners were considered so bad as not to be resurrected for the final judgement, but there was a large measure of disagreement among the rabbis about this (see Sanh. 10.3, Danby p.397f.). Matthew has no exceptions to the view that all must be judged finally (10.14,15; 25.31f.).

Here we learn that the final judgement on the contemporary cities is going to be worse still. It follows that the sin of not repenting on the evidence, first hand, of Jesus' mighty works such as were foretold of the Messiah (Is. 35.5,6; 61.1,2, cf. Mt. 11.5) must be placed very high on the list of the criteria of judgement.

Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum were uniquely privileged in having witnessed many of Jesus' miracles, yet they had failed to repent. Jesus castigates entire cities. But corporate guilt must not be seen to contradict individual responsibility. It is clear that individuals as such would be punished (24.40ff.; 25.12,34f.). The vast majority in the modern cities, as in the ancient, simply yielded weakly to the crowd (cf. 24.12). But the principle of discrimination still held, for Matthew himself was from Capernaum and yet was a disciple (9.1,9 cf. Gen. 19.25ff.) Philip, Peter, Andrew and Nathanael were of Bethsaida (Jn. 1.44, 45).

The pride of Capernaum is an echo of that of Babylon which Isaiah warned would reduce it to Sheol (Is. 14.13ff.). Vainglory opposed to God's glory thus becomes an element in the criterion of judgement here. With this pride and vainglory may well be coupled demonic presumption. Lucifer (Is. 14.12) originally Helal, the day star of Canaanite myth, tries to ascend to the mountain of God (cf. Ezek. 28.14; Ps. 48.2), surpassing all other stars, but is cast down by the sun. Under henotheism, this becomes the story of a minor deity aspiring to the highest place where the supreme god lives. Finally it applies to the vaulting ambition of an earthly monarch, in this case the King of Babylon. This ambition results in destruction (cf. the King of Tyre in Ezek. 29.19).

Jesus' miracles surpassed all others in that they were all acts of compassion (except for the cursing of the fig tree, 21.19,20) unlike many O.T. miracles, e.g. the plagues of Egypt (cf. 2 Kings 2.24) and they were

done in Matthew often by the word alone, certainly with minimal external aids such as touching (8.3) but were unlike those of Moses who used a rod (Ex. 4.2, Num. 20.11, etc.).

Once before this (9.8) and once after (15.31) Matthew records that the witnesses of Jesus' miracles glorified God (cf. Ps. 136.4: "He alone does great wonders"). Failure not only to do so but failure to repent in face of such evidence of compassion wedded to power is the criterion of judgement here.

Additional Note on the Blind and the Lame

In order further to underline Jesus' compassion we observe that his mighty works included the healing of two blind men (9.27, in Capernaum) and of the blind and the lame (11.5). It is significant that Jesus' attitude to them in the Temple (21.14) further demonstrated his compassion towards them. This augments our estimate of Jesus' mercy and our understanding of the rejection of his mercy which is one criterion of judgement. This general theme appears after the event of 21.14 in 24.37f.; by implication in 25.41ff. and in the total rejection of Jesus, person, words and works, 27 passim cf. 21.38ff.

The O.T. law had placed restrictions on the blind and the lame in regard to worship (Lev. 21.18; 22.11; Deut. 15.21). An explanation of their exclusion from the Temple is given in 2 Sam. 5.8, David's unfortunate experience with the Jebusites. Part of the meaning of Mt. 5.17 may be that Jesus abrogated the law (and the tradition) which was hard on the blind and the lame.

Mt. 21.14 may well be a foil to Jewish prejudice against the lame and the blind.

Mek. 2.267 interpreting Ex. 20.15,18 observes: "... there were no blind ones amongst them". On the lame, "they stood" (Ex. 19.17) means: "... there were no lame ones amongst them". This is a doubtful inference as from Prov. 26.7; 2 Sam. 9.13 it may be deduced that a lame man could be lame on one foot and so able to stand though not straight. In Mt. 21.14: "...the lame came to him" so were able to walk and probably stand. The strained interpretation of Ex. 19.17 intensifies our appreciation of the Jewish bias in this matter. We may compare DR XV where the blind, lame (and deaf) were excluded from the Essene Community.

Mek. 3.183, Tr. Kaspā 4.45f. is milder. It states: "All are under obligation to appear in the Temple three times a year, except ... the lame and the blind."

12.1-8

In dealing with the unpardonable sin it is desirable to sketch the preliminaries. The first conflict (12.1-8) concerns criticism of the plucking and eating of corn on the sabbath. Jesus answers it with three examples from Scripture (1) 1 Sam. 21.1-7; (2) various texts regarding the priests' work, e.g. Lev. 24.8; Num. 28.9f.<sup>1</sup> (3) Hos. 6.6. (1) shows that human need comes before ritual law, in this case Ex. 25.30; Lev. 24.6-8; (2) demonstrates that some kinds of work have to be done on the sabbath; (3) is one of the great overarching principles of Scripture to which lesser laws must give way. So Jesus' enemies are seen to be petty-minded, wilfully lacking in a proper understanding of Scripture.

12.9-21

The second conflict is about healing. Jesus is not asked whether he adopts a strict or a lenient view, but whether he approves of any healing at all. Jesus appeals to common practice possibly the case of a poor man with only one sheep. Jesus answers the question about healing with another question as to whether it is lawful to do good on the sabbath. Here he seems to be suggesting the matter of intention. This particular sick man could have been healed the next day though the sheep might have perished

- 1 The scribes taught that the priests' work on the sabbath was legitimate, but they did not agree that this applied to ordinary life. Schürer (op.cit., Div.II, Vol.II, p.103) writes: "As the daily burnt offering must be offered on the sabbath in addition to a special offering (Num. 28.9,10) ... it is self-evident that all the transactions necessary for offering these sacrifices must be lawful even on the sabbath. (cf. Sifre on Num. Sect. 142; Jub. 1.10f. M. Pes., 6f."

The prevalent rabbinic opinion was that medical assistance was allowed only on the assumption that life was in danger. See Schürer, loc.cit., Div.II, Vol.II, p.104 and Shab. 74a, cf. Abrahams, op. cit., Series 1, p.134. Therefore the two cures v.13 and v.22 flew in the face of scribal tradition.

The Qumran community prohibited the rescue of an animal on the sabbath (DR 11).

If the controversy took place in Galilee which seems likely, then the relevance of the sabbath law as established by the School of Hillel is lessened.



had it been left till the next day. What is common is not the extent of their plight but the merciful attitude that ought to be adopted. So the enemies of Jesus have to be reckoned as deficient in mercy. But the argument from a sheep to a man is also an a fortiori argument - a man is more valuable than a sheep, even if the sheep's plight were more urgent. So Jesus' enemies are lacking in reasonableness.

Matthew abbreviates Mk. 3.7-12 probably because his concern here is with the Messianic secret (v.16) which provides the introduction of the quotation from Is. 41.1-4.<sup>1</sup> The wording of v.18 indicates that Jesus is more than the Servant of the Lord. 'Chosen' replaces 'uphold' in Is. 41.1 and 'beloved' is introduced. V.19 is probably to be understood as designating Jesus' meekness (11.28) and is also connected with the Messianic secret. V.20 shows his condescension and compassion for the weak which serves to throw into relief those without this attitude. Gentiles, who perhaps here present the weakest of the weak, are to be given hope in his name. If so those who reject him are also failing to accept the prophecy<sup>2</sup> and are stubbornly blind. This quotation of Isaiah together with that of Hos. 6.6 confirms the view of Schweizer (cf. p.176, below): "... according to Matthew it is Scripture that identifies Jesus' miracles as God's activity".<sup>3</sup> This increases the guilt of the scribes and Pharisees and becomes one of the criteria of judgement especially as these opponents of Jesus claimed to believe the O.T. (cf. 23.3a).

#### 12.22-42

The reaction to Jesus' healing of the blind and dumb demoniac is, as he points out, irrational, for how can Satan cast out Satan? Division in Satan's kingdom, city or house would mean the collapse of it. The Pharisees' disciples were exorcists and they claimed to cast out devils by the power of God, so

1 This diverges from both Greek and Hebrew texts, see Green, op.cit., ad loc.

2 For the unobtrusive, quiet gentleness that ought to have been expected of the Messiah, see the quotation from Schweizer below, p.175f.

3 Op. cit., p.217.

they will be judges of those who claim it can be done by Beelzebul (v.27, peculiar to Matthew). This factor makes the attitude of the Pharisees even more blameworthy. The conclusion they ought to have reached, Matthew shows, is that Jesus does it by the Spirit of God<sup>1</sup> (cf. Lk. 11.20 "finger of God")<sup>2</sup> and the Kingdom of God has begun (ἐφθασεν) to appear. This is the Kingdom for which they ought to have been yearning. The close connection with v.29 shows that the strong man is Satan and the one who binds him is Jesus. This is another appeal to plain reason. The devil must have met a superior force, he must have been bound or he would not have sat idly whilst his house was being plundered and his goods (subordinate devils?) reduced to impotence.

All this shows that repudiation of plain logical reasoning<sup>3</sup> is a criterion of judgement because it is part of the unforgivable sin. The

- 1 C.K. Barrett, The Holy Spirit and the Gospel Tradition, London, 1947, p.92, has a good analogy with the veiledness of the parables (but Jesus' enemies here are not merely blind to his Messiahship but could not have contradicted it more extremely): "The function of the miracles corresponds precisely to that assigned to the parables in Mk. 4.11f.: ... they may reveal, but if they do not, they harden the hearts of those who are blind to them ..." Matthew's parallel to Mk. 4.11f. (Mt. 13.13-15) softens the offensiveness of the *ἐνα* (Mk. 4.12) by substituting *δὲ* (v.13) but in v.15b. he retains the *ρηγοτε* (Mk. 4.12b.), so it can hardly be claimed that he draws the sting out of the concept of judicial blindness. Black AAGA p.113 points out that both *ἐνα* and *δὲ* go back to the same Aramaic word, so Matthew has deliberately chosen to modify his severity, usually greater than Mark's.
- 2 This is probably more original because it is a primitive phrase (Ex.9.19 31.18) and because it is more likely that "spirit" would replace "finger" than vice versa. Matthew evidently wants to emphasize that the sin is against the Spirit. On the originality of Luke's "finger of God", see C. K. Barrett, loc. cit., p.131, who writes: "Luke who in general shows so great an interest in the work of the Holy Spirit would not have omitted a reference to the Spirit which he found in a source."
- 3 On the theme of irrationality cf. The Gospel of Thomas 44 where Jesus is addressing the disciples: "From what I say unto you you do not know who I am, but you have become as the Jews; for they love the tree and hate its fruit, and they love the fruit and hate the tree" (Hennecke). This helps to explain Matthew's strong emphasis on trees and fruit (7.16-19; 12.33).

Matthew Henry with his customary pithy strength describes the sin in question as: "... an obstinate infidelity, which was resolved to stand it out against the clearest conviction" (An Exposition of the Old and New Testaments (6 Vols.) London, 1712, Vol. 5, ad loc.).

scribes and Pharisees are not with Jesus (v.30) so they must be against him. There is no neutral position (cf. 7.13f. etc.) Jesus is the one who gathers and inspires others to do so, not only in the sense of gathering wheat (3.12); garments (9.16); sheep (10.6; 15.16; 18.12, cf. Ezek. 36.24; Is. 40.11; 49.5); the elect (23.27), but in the sense that derives from these, of concentrated power and effort, of self-discipline and restriction in order to reach a goal (cf. 7.13,14).

The devil is the great dissipator of energy, sending men through the wide gate and along the broad way with too much licence, scattered like sheep without a shepherd (9.36), meandering down that way without a leader or a purpose. Scattering is not necessarily concerned with final things, but in this context it probably is. In Ezek. 36.19 the concepts of scattering and of judgement for disobedient behaviour are specifically connected and in many other parts of the O.T. scattering is clearly a punishment by God, (e.g. Gen. 11.4,8; Ex. 5.12; Num. 10.35; Ezek. 6.8 etc.; Zech. 1.21). Scattering renders people ineffective (1 Sam. 13.8,11; Prov. 20.26). It means they are defeated, (e.g. 2 Sam. 22.15; Ps. 18.14; Is. 18.2,7). To scatter may also apply to the teaching of Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

Bonnard goes so far as to specify of the Spirit, "en moi",<sup>2</sup> which though not in the text may be a valid interpretation of the primary meaning. This is important in view of the Son of Man's role in judgement. Yet he is "gentle and lowly in heart" (11.29) and we must beware of any hint that he might judge out of personal pique, in revenge for a personal insult. He explicitly states that the blasphemy against the Son of Man will be forgiven (v.32a.).

1 The Syrian and Armenian equivalent of scattering is used in The Story of Ahikar 3.1 where Ahikar's "son" Nadan scattered his father's words, i.e. did not heed them and disobeyed them. Also "scatter" is referred to what Nadan did with Ahikar's possessions. (Arabic 3.17). A disciple's pearls may be the teaching of Jesus (Mt. 7.6) and the Kingdom of heaven is likened to treasure (Mt. 13.44). See Charles, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, Pseudepigrapha, p.740f.

22 *Op. cit.*, ad loc.

To restrict the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit in Matthew to this particular occasion is unwarranted. Matthew does conceive of the Holy Spirit as operating other than in the bodily presence of Jesus: "... the spirit of your Father speaks in you," i.e. the disciples (10.20). In 12.36 the theme of judgement is extended to all: "I tell you, on the day of judgement men will render account for every careless word they utter" - men in general, not only Pharisees. Therefore the sin which the Pharisees are in danger of, or on the way to, committing (for it is an attitude rather than an act) may be applied to anyone who similarly denies the light he has received. Perhaps what is being done here is to contrast the inner revelation with the outward physical view of this nondescript<sup>1</sup> the Son of Man. The Pharisees consigned this wonder-worker and wonders alike to the Kingdom of Satan. The remotest chance that he might be a prophet or holy man was not entertained. If we take this interpretation we are not alone. Suzanne de Diétrich for example, writes:

"What is the sin against the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit is the Presence of God in us - the testimony of himself which God makes in the deepest level of our inner selves. Woe to the one who knowingly and wilfully resists this summons, this Holy Presence. It is the voice of God which he refuses or denies and then reduces to silence, He, so to speak, kills the Presence of God in him (see Heb.6.4-6)."<sup>2</sup>

Bonnard is aware of the problem of the person of Jesus and the divine power which he calls a disquieting paradox: "Le Fils de l'homme lui-même, en tant que Juge des derniers jours avertit les Juifs que, dans ses miracles, il n'y va pas tant de sa personne comme telle que de la puissance divine qui s'y déploie."<sup>3</sup> The distinction between Jesus, the worker of wonders and the Holy Spirit at work in him is hard to define. C. K. Barrett implicitly admits this when he writes: "... Jesus' *δύναμις* was regarded (by the evangelists) both as the power of the Spirit and also as an anticipation of the unveiling of God's power in the last days. But it was not ... the Spirit naked, unimpeded stripped of the cloak of human and worldly relativity."<sup>4</sup> What is important

1 See below p.238ff.

2 Op. cit., ad loc.

3 Op. cit., ad loc.

4 Op. cit., p.92.

for my purpose is the rejection of the inward conviction described so well by de Dietrich, quoted above.

The blasphemy against the Holy Spirit<sup>1</sup> is then a wilful conscious spurning of revelation, a disavowal of overwhelming evidence, perversely calling something good, evil. It is not simply in meeting Jesus that we receive revelation, but in perceiving through the Holy Spirit the wisdom, power and goodness manifested in him. This is why the whole of the preceding part of the chapter has been sketched. Much weight is lent to this interpretation of the unforgivable sin by the use of the neuter in vv. 41 and 42 instead of the masculine as one would expect, i.e. it is not Jesus as Son of Man but Jesus together with his works plus the convicting power of the Spirit which reveal God's presence in a way that cannot excusably be gainsaid.

Jesus' teaching was greatly concerned with forgiveness, inseparable from his passion. To blaspheme against the Holy Spirit manifested in Jesus' unsurpassed works of mercy was to reject the mercy and forgiveness that he offered.

Associated with this is what follows, the importance of words (vv. 33, 38). We may first note that the trees (character) can be made good or bad.

Here lies the element of will and consciousness we observed above. Blindness is self-imposed. The devil could not snatch away the word if the heart's soil (13.19 cf. 2 Cor. 4.4) were not hardened by resistance. It is possible to know a truth at a superficial level but repudiate it at a deeper level.

The matter of truth has been a large strand underlying the whole fabric of the chapter and if Jeremias is correct it comes out explicitly in the word ἀργός in v.36. Plainly in 20.3,6 this word means unemployed

1 See Additional Note on the Jewish Background to the Unpardonable Sin.

2 The following two comments on John 15.7 may help to throw light on what we are trying to express. R.H. Strachan, The Fourth Gospel: The Significance and Environment, Third Edition, London, 1941, ad loc. says: "Jesus Himself did not regard His earthly life as a sufficient revelation," cf. C. Gore quoted by Leon Morris, The Gospel According to John, London, 1972, ad loc.: "... the coming of the Holy Ghost was not merely to supply the absence of the Son, but to complete His presence."

or idle. According to Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich<sup>1</sup> it can also mean useless or worthless. Jeremias<sup>2</sup> traces it to the Aramaic b<sup>e</sup>til meaning deceptive. In the context of v.36 this seems most apposite. From the rotten, unusable (σάπιρος) tree comes the rotten, unusable fruit. Speech is the crucial part of this fruit in this context. The utterance of lying words (that Jesus casts out devils by Beelzebul) hisses out of envenomed hearts, is fanged with Satanic malice and renders condemnation to the speakers.

1 Op. cit., p.104 § 3.

2 N. T. Theol., Vol. 1, p.220 n 4, M. Black in a private letter to me agrees that this is sound.

McNeile (op. cit., ad loc) notes several other instances of the word where it must mean 'idle': Targ. Eccles 5.2, the words of a fool; 2 Pet. 1.8, 'a fruit tree'; Jos. Ant. 12.9,5; 'fallow land'; B.J. 4.2,3, 'the sabbath'; On the other hand, McNeile's conclusion: "A ῥήμα ἄργον (α-ἔργον) is one that does not, and is not intended to, effect anything," seems illsuited to the context of Mt. 12.36 for it is one in which the enemies of Jesus had passed a judgement on him which was intended to effect something, namely his condemnation as one possessed by the Prince of the devils. Perhaps the way out of the disagreement between Jeremias and the other scholars may be found in Manson (Sayings, p.191) who writes: "... the 'idle' word reveals character more truly and completely than the considered statement." Certainly the charge of the Pharisees: "It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons that this man casts out demons" (12.24) is so irrational, as we see in Jesus' answer (12.26), that it is quite unworthy of their commonsense. It must therefore have sprung out of the abundance of hatred in their heart towards Jesus. This hatred had so prejudiced them that the result was deception.

In a penetrating article, Maurice Bellet (L'Irremissible ou le Péché sans Pardon," Christus, 1972, Vol. 19 (74) pp. 261-268) brings out the theme of deception. He contrasts the serpent's lie, believed by Eve in innocence, with the unforgivable sin calling it: "... la mort et le mensonge passés en l'obéissance à Dieu. Voilà pourquoi l'accusation d'hypocrisie, adressée par le Christ aux Pharisiens, est si grave et dépasse de loin le simple manque moral de sincérité ..." Speaking of the word of Jesus as that of the second Adam he adds: "... Si la parole de vérité est condamnée comme blasphème, c'est que le mensonge est au cœur de l'adoration même de Dieu", cf. Jn. 9.41 (p.166).

The outflow of the obstinately evil heart in the tongue is the criterion of judgement here. The reference to the preaching of Jonah and the words of Solomon and the use of the neuter *πλεῖον* shows that it is not the person of Jesus, but his words and deeds<sup>1</sup> that are intended to be greater than Jonah and greater than Solomon. Jesus' teaching was unsupported by quotations from famous rabbis or from scribal traditions. His sayings were sparkling, clear, pure, straight from the source. It was this which caused astonishment among the crowds (7.29). The reactions of the Jewish leaders, however, were various: blindness (13.13-16); hostility (15.12); protest (21.16); anger (21.45); conspiracy (12.14; 22.15); resolve to destroy him (21.46); false accusations (12.24; 26.62,65; 27.63); envy (27.18). The words and works of Jesus divide men into two sharply defined groups. Acceptance or rejection of them is therefore a criterion of judgement and this is made abundantly plain in that the men of Nineveh and the Queen of Sheba are to be witnesses for the prosecution.

The sign of Jonah includes both words and deeds. The Ninevites repented at the preaching of Jonah (12.41). Parallel to this is not the death and rising again of Jesus, but His preaching. On the other hand

- 1 Revelation is manifested in two ways, deeds of power and words of authority. Both are present in Jesus' reply to John's doubt: "... the blind receive their sight ... the poor have the Gospel preached to them ..." (11.5).

Both these ways could come in the category of signs. As in John, works may be the wider term embracing signs, though signs are so much more seldom mentioned in Matthew (see Additional Note , pp.187-9 below). The works of Jesus could be signs because their freshness, originality, boldness and power (see especially 9.6-8) proclaimed their authority.

- 2 For the unrelenting aggressiveness, wanton destructiveness, sadism and gratuitous cruelty of the Assyrians and the consequent wonder that the citizens of their capital city would repent and even more amazingly be summoned as witnesses against Jews at the Great Assize, see: Is. 5.29; Nah. 2.12. See also J. Baikie Lands and Peoples of the Bible, London, 1914, p.96ff.; Z.A. Ragozim, Assyria: from the Rise of the Empire to the Fall of Nineveh, The Story of the Nations (16 Vols.) London, 1888, Vol.13 passim and esp. pp.162,170,173,220,222,303,313,315,320f.,404. See also The Cambridge Ancient History, ed. J.B. Bury, S.A. Cook, and F.E. Adcock (12 Vols.), Cambridge, 1925, Vol.2, p.92 where it refers to "the fierceness and cruelty" of the Assyrians and attributes these to their religious beliefs. For the Jewish belief that the Ninevites only repented for forty days, see Ginzberg op.cit., Vol.4, p.253.

and in addition: "As Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights<sup>1</sup> in the heart<sup>2</sup> of the earth" (v.40). This verse is peculiar to Matthew. Luke simply has: "... as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites so shall the Son of Man be to this generation (11.31).

Matthew has reversed the natural, chronological Lucan (Q) order of the two sayings (Lk. 11.30,31) because he wished to stress not only that Jonah's preaching was a sign but that Jonah's virtual death and resurrection which he had referred to in v.40 was also part of the sign.<sup>3</sup>

Basically this triple sign was the only sign (v.39) to be given to that wicked and spiritually unfaithful generation. Bonnard<sup>4</sup> sees the sign as the virtual death of Jonah, but, if Jonah had remained in the marine monster he could hardly have preached to the Ninevites. Therefore, to the sign of death must be added the sign of resurrection. It is possible that Jonah included an account of his being swallowed and vomited up in his preaching, but if so, the book which bears his name does not record it. A glance at

1. The three days is perhaps of value as being too short a time for decomposition to set in and too long a time for it to be reasonably argued that the body was not really dead. It is more important as being the fulfilment of Hosea 6.2. Though Matthew does not mention Hosea here the emphasis on the three days is pronounced and it is difficult to believe he did not have it in mind. The three nights is only a problem for the literalist (Jesus was only in the tomb for two nights) because three days was, in any case, taken to be a short but indefinite time. The three nights is disingenuous and a mark of authenticity. In Mark's parallels to the prophecies of the Resurrection (Mk. 8.31; 9.31; 10.34) the usual phrase equivalent to "on the third day" is "after three days" (μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας) and almost as if to show that it was a current phrase, Matthew himself puts it on the lips of the chief priests and Pharisees (27.63).
2. "In the heart of" is a singularly Jewish phrase and peculiar to Matthew. The Mekilta (2.52, Tr. Shir. 6.130ff.) notes several uses of the heart, "... of the sea" (Ex. 15.8); "... of the terebinth" (2 Sam. 18.14); "... of heaven" (Deut. 4.11). Of these it says: "It had no heart but had a heart ascribed to it."
3. Luke must have this also in mind because he writes: "So will (ὅταν) the Son of Man be a sign" (11.30) and Jesus had already been preaching though he had not finished preaching.
4. P. Bonnard, op.cit., ad loc (p.184) "le signe qui caractérise la destinée de Jonas et, après elle, celle de Jésus, est à savoir l'engloutissement dans la mort." But this cannot be all that Matthew means, even if it be primary, inasmuch as the Resurrection could not take place without prior death, nor could the teaching be so valid without the example and benefit of sacrificial death.



the map makes it absurd to maintain that any appreciable number of Ninevites could have witnessed Jonah's "resurrection".<sup>1</sup>

It may be felt that Mark is more original in his parallel, "no sign shall be given to this generation" (8.12), but he could well have meant "no sign that you would accept". Neither the preaching of Jesus nor His death and resurrection evoked a favourable response from the scribes and Pharisees. Their demand for a sign<sup>2</sup> revealed their wickedness; the giving of the sign their associated disbelief.<sup>3</sup>

Failure to repent, faced with the total phenomenon of "something greater than Jonah", is the criterion of judgement in v.41.

1 For Jonah as a type of Jesus, see Ginzberg op. cit., Vol. 6, p. 351.

2 The kind of sign that might have been appreciated by them may be gathered from Rabbi Jose ben Kisma (San. 98a.). Asked by his disciples "when comes the Messiah?" he replied, "I fear you ask for a sign." When they denied this and yet his answer seemed to them vague, they then asked: "Master give us a sign". When they reaffirmed their wish for a sign he said: "... let the waters of the grotto of Paneas be turned into blood", and Sanh. 98a. adds: "... they turned into blood." (Son. p.665). This is, of course, reminiscent of the plague of Egypt. Or the sign they might have wanted could have been fire from the sky (2 Kings 1.10ff.). Jesus and His questioners may have had the prophet like Moses (Deut. 18.20-22) in mind, for there both Moses and sorcerers are mentioned, and the latter is exactly what Jesus was being accused of. The book of Jonah was one of the prescribed texts for the Day of Atonement and Jesus may have been directing their attention to what they very well knew.

Interesting background to the current idea of a sign from heaven is provided in the legendary account of a doctrinal argument, 1st C. A.D., between R. Eleazar ben Hyrcanus and his colleagues. Having exhausted his arsenal of reasoning and still not convinced them, he performed a miracle only to be told that there is no room for miracles in a legal debate. In exasperation he then exclaimed "if my teaching is correct, may it be proved by heaven!" whereupon a celestial voice declared, "What have you against R. Eleazar, for his teaching is correct?" "But this intervention was ruled out of order because in the Bible it is written that decisions are to be reached by majority vote." (b. Baba Mezia, 59c).

3 See 28.15 where they may be presumed to be included among the Jews who spread the story that Jesus' disciples stole the body.

Passing to v.42 on the condemnation arising from "something greater than Solomon" we should note that Solomon acted contrary to the Deuteronomic law (Deut. 17.16,17)<sup>1</sup> in that he did multiply to himself horses, wives, (silver and) gold. He had twelve thousand horsemen, so presumably the same number of horses (1 Kings 11.26); seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines (1 Kings 11.3); he imported annually six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold<sup>2</sup> (1 Kings 10.14).

According to Sanh. 2.4<sup>3</sup> the king was permitted only eighteen wives; enough horses for his chariots only; enough silver and gold to pay his soldiers only. (It is, however, doubtful whether soldiers could have been paid in gold. There is no record of its use in commercial transactions at the time of Solomon).

It is clear then that Solomon was disobedient to God for even if he were unaware of the literal commandments in Deuteronomy he was probably aware of their spirit. He certainly knew the first commandment and by

- 1 We are probably safe to say that this is how Matthew saw it notwithstanding that fact that some scholars date Deuteronomy in whole or in part much later than Solomon. See T. Witton Davies, "Deuteronomy", in Commentary on the Bible, ed. Arthur S. Peake, London, etc., 1937, p.231f. T. Battersby Herford, "Deuteronomy", A New Commentary on Holy Scripture, ed. Charles Gore, London, 1928, p. 147f., states that Deut. 12-26 was compiled between the times of Hezekiah and Josiah and that it: "... includes very ancient usages and customs, side by side with more recent decisions ..." Therefore the laws which pertain to the king may have been written at the time of Samuel on account of the dubious wisdom in having a king at all (1 Sam. 8.9ff.). See also G.R. Driver Deuteronomy, Edinburgh, 1896, p. xciii. At any rate the laws in question seem tailor-made to fit the case of Solomon, possibly with the wisdom of hindsight.
- 2 Some idea of the magnitude of Solomon's annual import can be gathered from the following: David prepared for the building of the Temple 3,000 talents of gold and the princes, 5,000 (1 Chron. 29.4-7); the Queen of Sheba presented to Solomon 120 talents (1 Kings 10.10); 1 talent was the tribute laid on the whole of Judah, after the death of Josiah, by the king of Egypt (2 Chron. 36.3 though 100 talents of silver were also included, which hints that gold was a luxury item). Only 100 talents were needed to pay 100,000 experienced warriors but they were silver talents, not gold (2 Chron. 25.6).
- 3 Danby, op. cit., p.384f.

going after Ashtoreth and Milcom and by setting up 'high places' for his wives' gods (1 Kings 11.4,5) he transgressed it and probably the second commandment also - "his wives turned away his heart" (1 Kings 11.3). He became virtually a syncretist. "His heart was not wholly true to the Lord his God" (1 Kings 11.5).

A greater phenomenon than Solomon was present in Jesus' Person, wisdom and obedience. He was utterly devoted to God (Mt. 4.10, cf. Deut. 6.13), unwilling to compromise with devilish (including military and financial) power. Far from having war horses, he rode a borrowed ass in peace (21.2ff.) and this despite being both David's son and David's Lord (22.43). He possessed almost nothing (8.20; 17.27) though John (12.6) indicates that Judas had some money in the communal purse.

Solomon's life was not consistent with his own wisdom. Though we may not attribute the collection of the book of Proverbs to him,<sup>1</sup> he probably knew many of them. He could have been the one who warned against dangers of strange women (Prov. 5.3 etc.) and the fleeting nature of wealth (Prov. 23.5; 27.24) and its unreliability (Prov. 11.4).

Quite apart from the question as to whether or not he wrote or compiled the book of Proverbs, we are told that he spoke three thousand proverbs (1 Kings 4.32) some of which were likely to be similar to those in the canonical book. He must have known also of the objections to the kingship (1 Sam. 8.10ff.) and of the fate that overtook the Israelites owing to their fornication with Moabite women (Num. 25.1ff.) and the associated idolatry.

Jesus, on the contrary, fulfilled his own teaching (e.g. Mt. 6.24; 10.38; 16.24) in his sacrificial life and death.

1 W.O.E. Oesterley, The Book of Proverbs, London, 1929, p. xxii, writes: "the collections of proverbs ... contain elements which go back to the time of Solomon". See also William McKane, Proverbs, London, 1970, p. 8f., where he writes: "It is a reasonable assumption that the Instruction (chapters 1-9) was appropriated by Israel as early as the reign of Solomon ... we are not able to inspect it at its point of origin."

Solomon's practice did not match his profession or his reputation,<sup>1</sup> yet the Queen of Sheba made a long and hazardous journey to hear his wisdom. Therefore the Queen would be a witness for the prosecution of those who failed to hear the wisdom of one so greatly superior to Solomon.

Failure to hear the wisdom of Jesus is the criterion of judgement in 12.42.<sup>2</sup>

- 1 Seeing these at a deeper level than the Queen could be expected to understand.
- 2 The Aramaic quabbel means to hear, receive or obey and this wealth of meaning, assuming an Aramaic original, may well apply here but not in 7.24ff. where a distinction is made between hearing and doing.

Additional Note on the Jewish Teaching Relevant to Unpardonable Sin

Jewish tradition had nothing exactly corresponding to the unforgivable sin. However, the rabbis differentiated between all other sins and "the sin of profanation of the Name of God" for which neither repentance, nor the Day of Atonement, nor bodily suffering have power to effect pardon. Yoma 86a; Sifre on Num. 100. If the name is taken as the revealed nature of God, then the correspondence is rather close.

McNeile points out (op. cit., p.178): "In Jewish phraseology serious sins are often spoken as unforgivable, Num. 15.30f. He who sins deliberately shall be cut off from among his people with his iniquity upon him = unforgiven cf. 1 Sam. 3.14; Is. 22.14. Till ye die = never." He proceeds to quote Philo, De Profugis on Ex. 21.17 (Thomas Mangey, Philonis Judaei Opera (2 Vols.) London, 1742, Vol.1, p.558): "... the lawgiver well nigh shouts and cries aloud that no forgiveness is to be given to those who blaspheme the divine Being ... And what evil speaking could be more shameful than to say not concerning us but concerning God that He is the source of evil." This interpretation comes close to Mt. 12.31,32.

There was a rather wide measure of disagreement among the rabbis regarding the possibility of repentance and forgiveness for the most serious sins. On the one hand Abrahams finds in Yoma 87a that: "Even the worst type of sinner 'he who makes others sin' is not regarded as a hopeless case, even he may come to repent" (Abrahams op. cit., 1.145). Abrahams continues: "The confession of sin on the Day of Atonement includes offences of the most varied kind including breaches of the Decalogue and those sins (profanation of the name and so forth) which in the theoretic theology were pronounced unpardonable. Yet after enumerating them the worshipper adds: 'For all these, O God of forgiveness, forgive us ...'.

On the other hand S. Schechter (Some Aspects of Rabbinic Theology, London, 1909, p. 333)says: "Legend records that the prophet Elijah made a special journey to Damascus to cause Gehazi (who is supposed to have stirred up the people to worship idols) to do repentance, but that Gehazi referred him to a tradition, which he had from the prophet himself, that they do not make it possible for him to do repentance who causes others to sin." (Sotah 47a, cf. Sanh. 107b). On p. 334, Schechter continues on the subject of unrepentance and quotes the Pesikta Rabbati (ed. Friedmann, Vienna, 1880, 182b, quoted by folio) to the effect that: "there must be a strong determination of the part of the sinner to break with sin. To enter upon a course of repentance and not to leave off sinning is compared to the man who enters a bath with the purpose of cleansing himself of Levitical impurity but still keeps in his hand the dead reptile which is the cause of all his impurity."

Though some rabbis held that Manasseh's repentance was accepted (see Aggadat Bereshith 9.23; the Prayer of Manasseh and Tobit 14.10) 6.376f. n. 108 says: "... the prevalent opinion in rabbinic literature is that Manasseh was one of the few Jews (two others were Ahab and Jeroboam, Sanh. 102b; Ginzberg, 6.376 n. 109) who lost their portion in the world to come." He cites Sanh. 101b and several other rabbinic writings.

See also Ginzberg, op. cit., 4.280; 5.108f. n.615 and Sanh. 10.3,4 (Danby p.397f.).

One would not expect the Sectarians to have the same view of the sin against the Spirit as Matthew (12.31,32) but the DSS seem to agree that there is at least one unforgivable sin; the DSS have more than one

which probably come into this category. In both Matthew and the DSS stubbornness is a common factor, the word does not occur in Matthew but the concept is evident in Mt. 12. For instance, in the CR II we find: "Cursed be the man who enters the Covenant, while walking among the idols of his heart. He blesses himself in his heart and says: 'Peace be with me, even though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart' Deut. 29.18-19, whereas his spirit, parched (for lack of truth) and watered (with lies) shall be destroyed without pardon." Here the idea of falsity also appears as in Mt. 12.24,36.

In CR IX, "men of perdition" are referred to as being fit objects for "everlasting hatred". This might have been the source of "hate your enemy" in Mt. 5.43, but it definitely shows that for the Essenes some are irretrievably lost.

Also in CR IX we discover that a deliberate sin was punished in the community by permanent expulsion with the probable implication that the sin was unforgivable. Deliberateness is a feature of the sin condemned in Mt. 12.31,32.

Oesterley (The Sayings of the Jewish Fathers, p.xvi) notes a Midrash on Deut. 3.5 which may throw light on Matthew's attitude to judgement especially in 10.14,15; 11.20-24; 12, passim. R. Simeon ben Shetach (one of the authors of the sayings of the Aboth) influential during the reign of Queen Alexandra (Salome) possibly his sister B.C. 76-67, see Oesterley, Ibid), was presented with an ass which one of his pupils had bought from an Arab. On the neck of the animal they found a costly jewel. Though the value of the jewel would have released Simeon from his trade (he was a linen-draper in a small way) he returned the jewel to the Arab who exclaimed: "Praised be the God of Simeon ben Shetach." In Mt. 12 the scribes and Pharisees ought to have exclaimed: "Praised be God of Jesus. We have seen the power and loving kindness of God in person."

Evidence that this might have been in the mind of Matthew (substituting the power and love of Jesus for the honesty of the rabbi) is found at the end of the story of the stilling of the storm. The men (this word is curiously and peculiarly in Matthew alone, not "they", the disciples) ask: "What sort of a man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?" 8.27 (par. Mk. 4.31; Lk. 8.25). The comparable question in Ps. 89.8,9 and its answer must have been known to Christians and especially to Jewish Christians.

"O Lord of hosts,  
who is mighty as thou art, O Lord  
with thy faithfulness round about thee?  
Thou dost rule the raging of the sea  
when its waves rise, thou stillest them"

With regard to M. 12.22, the healing of the demoniac, Ps. 65.7 is even more appropriate:

(God) "who dost still the roaring of the seas  
the roaring of their waves,  
the tumult of the peoples."

See also Ps. 29.10a "... the Lord sits enthroned over the flood" and Ps. 107.23-30. All these likely allusions could hardly be overlooked by a devoted Christian evangelist or even by his readers. Though not explicit, they are certainly in the spirit of Matthew. Schweizer would corroborate this. In his exposition of Mt. 8.17 (op. cit., p.217) where Matthew quotes Is. 53.4 (the only explicit citation of Is. 53 in the Gospels), cf. Is. 42, p.162,

above, he refers to 12.15-21 and adds: "Matthew sees the acts expected of the Messiah - the quiet, inconspicuous, propaganda-free righteousness - primarily in Jesus' healings (cf. 8.17)."

P. Bonnard (op. cit., ad loc) also agrees with this approach, noting that God is the only one who stills storms in many of the Psalms and citing Ps. 29.10,11.

While miracles in general are not directly the point at issue in considering the unpardonable sin, H. Loewe provides a summary of the leanings of the rabbis in this respect which is valuable background.

In "The Ideas of Pharisaism", an essay in "The Contact of Pharisaism with Other Cultures", Judaism and Christianity, Vol. 2, p.19 he writes: "... with regard to both biblical and post-biblical miracles there was a strong tendency among the rabbis to limit the sphere of the miraculous."

In the same work on p.21 he says: "The Rabbis did not mean most of the legends (about miracles) to be taken seriously", and on p.23: "In the liturgy only two references to post-biblical miracles are found and they are in hymns."

This prevailing attitude might be taken as a plea in mitigation, in that it is harder to believe in miracles when one's colleagues and one's traditions have almost ruled them out. However, it seems to me that the attitude represents rather an assiduously cultivated closed mind which, in Matthew's view, refused to believe even the most immediate, first hand and convincing evidence and, moreover, spoke against the combined wonder-worker, works and Holy Spirit.

12.43-45

Unless one were prepared to go so far in allegorization as to agree with Fenton that the "... last state is their condemnation at the last judgement" (which I am not) one must leave aside this passage as lacking direct relevance<sup>1</sup> to the theme of final judgement.

However, it may well assist the understanding of the unforgivable sin in that it exhibits the state of those who may have just been castigated by Jesus. Theirs may be first, the state of emptiness, purged of indiscipline and lawlessness, then of being invaded by this one plus seven worse devils of pride, hatred, unreason, obstinate disbelief, malice, etc. There could be a connexion with 5.20 for there negative righteousness is part of the utter inadequacy of that of the scribes and Pharisees.

1 Manson (Sayings, p.87) holds that Matthew has moved the pericope from the Q context (Lk. 11.24-26) because he saw that it had no connexion with the Beelzebul controversy. This is correct inasmuch as Matthew probably wanted to avoid the danger of an exorcism by Jesus being understood as having left the house of the soul empty.



15.13,14

These warnings<sup>1</sup> probably concern final judgement because uprooting has some resemblance to other cases of destruction of vegetation which definitely indicate final judgement: chaff (3.12); trees (3.10; 7.19; 12.32ff.); darnel (13.30, 41, 42). Though burning is more severe than uprooting, the treatment of the bad fish (13.48b.) which also signifies final judgement (13.49) is without fire, the frequent concomitant of judgement. To fall into a pit or ditch is associated with judgement in Ps. 7.15; Prov. 26.27; Is. 14.18; Jer. 31.44. 15.13 is peculiar to Matthew and has a strong Jewish flavour<sup>2</sup>. 15.14 has a parallel in Lk. 6.39 but the latter is in the form of a question. Matthew's affirmative statement sharpens the admonition.

As a plant cannot plant itself and the Father did not plant the Pharisees with their attitude, then it is a fair inference that Satan must have planted them (cf. 13.39). The text is a corrective against any glory in human achievement and so dependence on the Father becomes part of the criteria of judgement. The Pharisees had failed to submit to conversion and to become as little children (18.3,4).

What is meant by being offended at (σκαυδαλίζειν) Jesus' saying here (15.12) may be gathered from 12.14 which with 18.7f. is in the context of judgement.

The criteria of judgement here, arising from the context are: evading<sup>3</sup> the Fifth Commandment by applying the scribal tradition (vv. 3-6); inner evil (vv. 8,11,17-20), yoked with outward profession of worship (v.8) and

1 There is some doubt as to the text of 15.13, see Metzger op. cit., ad loc., but if τυφλω were to be removed the sense would not be materially altered.

2 Schweizer, op.cit., ad loc., cites several instances from the O.T., pseudepigraphical and Qumran writings in which the figure of planting the elect occurs. Cf. also the Gospel of Thomas 40; John 15.2,6.

3 Evasiveness is a matter we noted when considering 5.20, above.

with scrupulous attention to the details of the tradition (v.20b.). Besides, as the concept of blind guides reappears in 23.16, an associated criterion is the wrong and irrational sense of values which makes swearing by the gold of the temple culpable but swearing by the temple itself of no account.<sup>1</sup>

1 Cf. the a fortiori argument in 12.12.

18. 6-9

The word *σκανδαλίζειν* occurs fourteen times in Matthew (cf. Mark, eight; Luke, twice) and its cognate noun *σκανδαλον* five times (cf. Mark not at all, Luke once). So it is evidently both relatively important to Matthew and in view of the gravity of its contexts in an absolute sense also. Instances which throw most light on 18. 6ff. are 16. 17; 24. 10; 26. 31, 33. In the first, Peter, momentarily possessed by Satan, tries to dissuade Jesus from the Cross. 24. 10, peculiar to Matthew, is associated with false prophets (24. 9) who entice disciples to have false beliefs and who are in turn, only in Matthew (24. 24), found in company with false christs. It is evident that the concept of *σκανδαλίζειν* and its cognates means to cause to fall away from right belief or conduct<sup>1</sup>, to cause to depart from the narrow way or something of the sort.

We may therefore take the criterion of judgement in 18. 6 to be causing one of the disciples to apostatize - disciples are indicated by Matthew's addition<sup>2</sup> of the words *εἰς ἑμέ.*

The importance of Matthew's interpretation of little ones may be reflected in the Gospel of Thomas, 12<sup>3</sup>: "... James the Just for whom the heavens and the earth came into being". This must be hyperbole. Surely James was not the only just man. The reason why it is so dreadful to

1 Probably conduct for McNeile, op. cit., ad loc, rightly states: "it is always used in an ethical sense."

2 Cf. Lk. 17. 1: "... these little ones ..."  
 Mk. 9. 42: "... these little ones who believe ..."  
 Mt. 18. 6: "... these little ones who believe in me ..."  
 Manson, *Sayings*, pp. 139 sees these texts as: "... a steady movement in the direction of turning 'little ones' into disciples." Luke's version is probably the original.

3 *New Testament Apocrypha*, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 512. For further discussion of "little ones" see below under "least" pp. 262ff. and cf. Clem. ad Cor., 46 which reads τῶν ἐκλεκτῶν μου τῶν μικρῶν μου.

scandalize a little one who believes in Jesus may be, however, as it is for such that the heavens and the earth came into being.

Vv. 7-9 can only be interpreted as elaborating v. 6 and serve to underline the seriousness of the sin and the drastic measures which may be necessary to avoid it. Whereas in 5. 29, 30 the eye came first in line with Job. 31. 1. 7 on sexual desire, here the hand comes first as if Matthew were saying: "Here I am speaking about something other than sex."

The construction  $\pi\lambda\sigma\tau\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\epsilon\iota\nu$  with  $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\varsigma$  is unique in the Synoptics<sup>1</sup> and therefore it is likely to be significant especially as Matthew has presumably added  $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\varsigma \epsilon\rho\epsilon$  to what he found in Mark. Moreover, Matthew uses the plain dative for belief in John the Baptist (21. 25; cf. Mk. 11. 31; Lk. 20. 5)<sup>2</sup>.

$\epsilon\acute{\iota}\varsigma$  follows  $\pi\lambda\sigma\tau\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\epsilon\iota\nu$  more than fifty times in the N.T. and of

- 1 With the exception of a strongly attested reading ( $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\varsigma \epsilon\rho\epsilon$ ) in Mk. 9. 42. However, these additional words are absent from  $\Psi$   $\Delta$  and  $\Delta$  and it seems that they have crept into the Markan text from Matthew's parallel, so the UBS Committee felt that they ought to be left out of Mark's text (see Metzger, op. cit., p. 101f.).
- 2  $\pi\lambda\sigma\tau\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\epsilon\iota\nu$  with the dative alone (no preposition) occurs thirty-three times in the N.T. This is the construction almost invariably used for belief in God (e.g. John 5. 10; Acts 27. 25; Rom. 4. 3; Gal. 3. 6). It expresses besides belief in the Scriptures (John 2. 11; 5. 47) or Moses (John 5. 46); in Jesus' sayings (John 5. 47); in the sound of the Gospel (Rom. 10. 16); in falsehood and truth (1 Thess. 2. 11, 12). It is twice used for belief in the Lord (Acts 5. 14; 18. 8) where a closeness associated with salvation is in view. Six instances occur in John (5. 46; 8. 31, 45, 46; 10. 37, 38) where Jesus is the object, but in five of these there is a strong element of doubt or questioning whether the Jews really did believe in Jesus (or also his works, 10. 38); 16. 9 provides the only example in John of  $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\varsigma$  being present in a case of unbelief. Against forty-one cases in the N.T. of  $\pi\lambda\sigma\tau\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\epsilon\iota\nu$  with  $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\varsigma$  before "the Lord", only seven can be mustered to stand in the ranks of  $\pi\lambda$  with the dative and five with  $\epsilon\pi\acute{\iota}$ .

these only seven instances<sup>1</sup> occur where it governs anyone or anything other than Jesus, Christ or the Lord. Of these, Rom. 10. 10 is irrelevant to my purpose and the remainder are closely associated with Jesus with the exception of Rom. 4. 18. Even it is connected with Jesus in that only through him (cf. Gal. 3. 29) could Abraham be "the father of many nations".

Not much can be made of the Lucan usage for he employs it only once in his Gospel (16. 11) and there with a sense of "entrust"; in Acts the construction serves three times to describe belief in the Lord (10. 43; 14. 23; 19. 4) but ἐπί has the same sense (11. 17; 16. 31; 22. 19) as does the plain dative (5. 15; 18. 8). As in Acts so in Romans ἐπί appears to be a substitute for εἰς (4. 5; 9. 33; 10. 11).

It is to John that we must look for the predominant use of πιστεύειν with εἰς followed by Jesus (or his name) as the one believed in. In John there is substantial evidence for saying that a close bond between

1 These are: John 12. 36, "in the light"; John 12. 44, in the one that sent Jesus; John 14. 1a, "in God", obviously closely connected with the same constructions in v. 1b referring to Jesus (cf. v. 6b); Rom. 4. 18 εἰς τὸ γενέσθαι, taking ἐπίστευσεν with what follows; (Rom. 10. 10); 1 Pet. 1. 18, "in the God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ"; 1 John 5. 13, "is the witness God gave concerning his Son".

Jesus and the believer is indicated by the construction<sup>1</sup>. This is because of the remarkable number of instances where it occurs with Jesus or his name<sup>2</sup>. Elsewhere in the N.T. besides the references to Luke and Acts, above, the construction is found in Rom. 10. 14; Gal. 2. 16; Phil. 1. 29; 1 John 5. 10, 13.

The only text where certain belief is present and  $\epsilon\iota\varsigma$  is not used is 10. 38. With this exception we may claim that altogether the evidence from John shows that when it is desired to emphasize personal

- 1 Concerning John's use of  $\pi\iota$  with  $\epsilon\iota\varsigma$  Leon Morris in The Gospel According to John (London, 1972, p. 336), writes:

"Faith, for John, is an activity which takes men right out of themselves and makes them one with Christ. It is important to notice that the construction is literal translation of the Hebrew  $\גַּם יִסְמְךָ$ . This strengthens the hand of those who see a Semitic original behind this Gospel. But it also points us to an important aspect of the subject on which Dodd has well commented: 'It would seem that  $\pi\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\upsilon\sigma\alpha\iota$  with the dative so inevitably connoted simple credence, in the sense of an intellectual judgement, that the moral element of personal trust or reliance inherent in the Hebrew and Aramaic phrase - an element integral in Christ - needed to be otherwise expressed.' This 'moral element of personal trust' is of the first importance for any understanding of Christianity and there had to be some way of bringing it out.  $\pi\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\upsilon\sigma\alpha\iota \epsilon\iota\varsigma$  is the construction which does this."

It appears that John's many instances may guide our understanding of Matthew's solitary instance of the construction towards this "moral element of personal trust".

It is perhaps significant that in 27. 42 Matthew has the plain dative after  $\pi\iota$ . May he not be implying: "Jesus' enemies were not in a frame of mind to claim that they would, if their condition was met, attain to the close trust involved in the use of  $\epsilon\iota\varsigma$  as in 18. 6" ?

- 2 John 1. 12; 2. 11; 2. 23; 3. 15, 16, 18, 36; 4. 39; 5. 24; 6. 29, 35, 40, 46, 47; 7. 5, 31, 38, 39, 48; 8. 30; 9. 35; 10. 42; 11. 25, 26, 45, 48; 12. 11, 37, 44 bis; 14. 1b, 12; 16. 9; 17. 20.

trust πιστεύειν with εἰς is the appropriate way of expressing it. Since Matthew did not find the unique phrase in Mark or Q we may suppose that he shared a common phraseology with John, though the only place where Matthew surely has a Johannine flavour is ll. 27 (cf. John 14. 6b - 11).

The fate described in v. 6b taken with vv. 8f. is plainly one of final judgement for in v. 7 'eternal fire' and in v. 8 'the fire of Gehenna' appear<sup>1</sup>. Matthew stresses the awfulness of the drowning by the phrase ἐν τῷ πελάγῃ τῆς θαλάσσης which is stronger than that of the Markan and Lucan parallels (Mk. 9. 42; Lk. 17. 2) εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν. Possibly the phrase for Matthew had overtones of the dread in which Jews held the open sea (Ps. 46. 2) and it may have represented heathendom for him as it did in the O.T. (Ps. 65. 5, 7; Is. 60. 5, etc). McNeile notes: "The force of the words is heightened by the fact that it is not a Jewish punishment. In Jos. Ant. XIV, XV. 10 it is an act of vengeance; in Aboda Zara iii. 3, 9 'to cast with the Salt Sea' is an expression for the destruction of heathen objects"<sup>2</sup>. This reference to the Salt Sea is perhaps not consistent with the peculiar phrase of Matthew "far out into the open sea" for the Salt Sea is landlocked. Nevertheless, taken with the other possible reference to the heathen it could hint at the notion that he who offends an obscure disciple is, for Matthew, as bad as a heathen (cf. 1 Tim. 5. 8 where a comparable idea is connected with neglecting one's physical family).

1 On Mt. 18. 7, cf. Ber. R. 10. 11: "Woe to the world because of His judgement".

2 Op. cit., ad loc.

21. 33-46

What is found in early Israelite religion regarding death as equivalent to final judgement may apply here (see pp. 87 f. above) but if all nations (28. 18-20) include Jews, as I believe, then the Jews are to receive another chance. This is despite the destruction of the tenants and the fact that God is going to give the vineyard, representing the house of Israel (Is. 5. 7)<sup>1</sup> to others (v. 41b), Gentiles<sup>2</sup> (cf. 22. 9, 10). Owing to the lack of a definite<sup>3</sup> warning of final judgement here I will only deal with the passage briefly. But it has a bearing on other parts of Matthew which concern my theme and two main points demand consideration.

The importance of the passage for the theme of judgement lies first in the failure to produce fruit. Matthew evidently considers this matter to be more vital than Mark (Mt. 21. 41b, cf. Ps. 1. 3, to which Mark has no parallel though he does have a parallel to Mt. 21. 34b, namely Mk. 12. 2).

Secondly, and connected with the first, Matthew puts the answer to what shall be done to the wicked tenants in the mouth of the audience (chief priests and elders, v. 23). This shows that these people knew the meaning of the parable (though Mark also has a parallel to their perception - Mk. 12.12) and Matthew adds what he found in Mk. 12.12: " ... they perceived he was speaking against them" and he may be referring to 23. 31; 27. 51 because he wanted to make plain that the Jews knew

1 Mt. 21. 33 has an obvious allusion in thought and phraseology to Is. 5. 1f.

2 Several scholars see allegory in the parable, e.g. Green op. cit., ad loc, Jeremias, PJ, p. 70.

3 Final judgement might be reckoned implicit by comparison with 5. 21, 22 where it is explicit, because several murders had been done, the last with malice aforethought. If v. 44 were certainly part of the text, which it is not (see Metzger, op. cit., ad loc) the pulverizing stone would probably indicate final judgement. The verse is however a genuine part of the text of Luke (20. 18).



what they were doing<sup>1</sup>. So in both Mark and Matthew the persecution and killing of the servants<sup>2</sup> (= prophets in Matthew, owing to the similarity in wording to 23. 37) and the slaughter of the son are present.

If this parable should be about final judgement our criteria would be the planned and deliberate murder of the prophets and the son sent by God and a covetous desire to usurp the son's inheritance in the house of Israel (" ... let us kill him and have his inheritance", v. 38b).

#### 22. 1-10

As in 21. 33-46 there is no certain note of final judgement. It is, however, clearly stated that the first invited guests were not worthy of the King's invitation. With this we may compare 10. 13, and since the latter verse is in a context of judgement this must increase the possibility that 22. 1-10 also refers to judgement. Wherever else the word *ἄγιος* appears in Matthew (3. 8; 10. 10, 11, 37, 38) it is also in the context of judgement<sup>3</sup>.

Derrett may enhance our appreciation of the passage. We will let him speak his own words:

- 1 Cf. Lk. 23. 34 which is absent from Matthew and cf. Acts 3. 17. Luke believes that many of those responsible for the crucifixion did not know what they were doing.
- 2 In Mark 12. 2-5 the servants arrived singly.
- 3 10. 10, however, is so only in a general way and it is not directly related to our theme.

"Matthew, by insisting on the midrash on Zp. 1, and making the host the king, implies something more than immediate inconvenience. Refusing a king's invitation is very rare; but in the petty kingdoms of the Syrian Orient acceptance had overtones. First since reciprocity was impossible (assuming the invitees were not the King's peers) a present would have to be bought; and since this was for a son's wedding it would have to be as large a present as the unfortunate invitee could manage to bring. Next, attendance at the banquet implied approval of the matrimonial alliance and allegiance to the king. His position was obviously doubtful at the moment. His insistence on their coming was nothing less than an enforcement of authority which one-third of the invitees thought it prudent to dispute." <sup>1</sup>

From this paragraph there may be extracted the following criteria of judgement: dislike of being put to inconvenience; a stingy attitude to God; disapproval of God's plan, possibly extending to the marriage of his Son with the church (but this would entail more allegorizing than some would accept); lack of submission to and rejection of God's authority; disloyalty; a fatal misjudgement of the power of God. But since Derrett has not conclusively shown that Matthew insisted on the midrash some of what he says can only be speculative.

When Derrett goes on to suggest that taking up the cross (Mt. 10. 38; 16. 24) is similar to Moses lifting up the rod in Exodus 17, he may be going beyond the evidence and unconsciously reading into Matthew his knowledge of John 3. 14, and the pole with the brazen serpent. (This makes us suspicious of his whole case.) However, though there is no evidently close connection between this parable and the command to take up the cross it may well be present. We may, very tentatively, add to our criteria an unwillingness to take up the cross.

Rebels and killers of prophets and apostles are to be destroyed and their city burnt (cf. 23. 34-38). In Jewish eyes this temporal destruction

1 Op. cit., p. 149.

could also have meant final judgement. The city should probably be thought of as Jerusalem, and the first invitees as the Jews. Luke's parable of the Great Supper has: "none of those invited will eat of my supper" (14. 24)<sup>1</sup>. In Matthew, none of the first invitees, so far as we can tell, did in fact eat of the feast; but Matthew does not say so, which relatively diminishes the threat.

#### 22. 11-14

Gentiles are not to escape final judgement for some of them are bad (22. 10) and the Kingdom is a corpus mixtum (cf. 13. 24-30, 36-43); likewise, the church (26. 24, 47-50).

Jeremias takes the view that the inspection of the guests (v. 11) is the last judgement and this is valid whether we accept Derrett's findings or not. The outer darkness, binding hand and foot, wailing and gnashing of teeth, all relate to final judgement.

22. 11-14 appears to be appended to the preceding. If so, it is possible that it enshrines negligence as its criterion of judgement. Though this does not solve the problem of how the man without a wedding garment could be blamed when he had just been invited in from the street, the text does not preclude this late invitee from going home quickly to change out of his working clothes. Some<sup>2</sup> have found a background in the story of Samson at Timnah (Judges 14. 12-19) or Jehu (2 Kings 10. 22f.), who supplied garments for their enemies, but these cases are dissimilar.

1 "This saying is only a threat if it refers to the Messianic banquet" observes Jeremias, soundly (Joachim Jeremias, Rediscovering the Parables, London, 1963, p. 140).

2 See Benedict Green, op. cit., ad loc.

J. Jeremias<sup>1</sup> finds no evidence that a king supplied garments at his son's wedding in 1st Century Palestine. On the other hand, the same author<sup>2</sup> has the ingenious suggestion that, in Luke, the host was a nouveau riche tax collector who wanted to make a big impression. It is just possible that Matthew's king could be a parvenu king for reasons which will shortly appear. Derrett's thesis that the parable refers to a summons to a holy war seems more plausible and certainly makes more sense of these verses<sup>3</sup>.

If we take the parable of R. Johanan ben Zakkai mentioned by Jeremias<sup>4</sup> as a basis, it assists understanding.

According to this, a preliminary invitation went out without specifying the hour and the wise invitees attired themselves whereas the foolish continued their usual occupations and so, when the immediate summons came, had to travel direct to the wedding with their ordinary clothes.

When the king posed his question, the man was speechless without excuse (cf. Rom. 1. 20). Rom. 1 has another link with these verses, if

1 PJ, p. 65.

2 Rediscovering the Parables, p. 141.

3 Law in the New Testament, London, 1970, pp. 126-155.

4 PJ, p. 188.

Derrett<sup>1</sup> is correct, namely idolatry, which might be a major criterion of judgement here as in Rom. 1.

- 1 The Palestinian Targum, Derrett points out, has a variant on Zeph. 1. 8. Instead of "all who are clothed in strange clothing (M. T.)" ("foreign attire" R. S. V.), we have a gloss, "all who busy themselves to worship idols". This is one of the many points at which Derrett's thesis is both stimulating and helpful so we may at this point allow him to lay his own foundation in his own words:

"The notorious difficulties in the two parables of the Great Supper (Lk. 14. 16-24) and the Wedding Feast (Mt. 22. 1-14) could, it seems, be solved if it is accepted as a hypothesis that Jesus' tale is an artistic midrash on Zp. 1. 1-16 concentrating on vv. 7, 8, in the context of the Holy War. Dt. 20 and occasional verses from Dt. 24, 25 and 28 along with Ex. 17 and other references to 'Amalek', not forgetting Is. 65, supply the complex of, as it were, underground streams which feed that source which is the ostensible starting point of the parable." (loc. cit., p. 148.)

Acceptance of Derrett's thesis has many great advantages. For instance, it solves the difficulty of the change from *δοῦλοι* vv. 3, 6, 8, 10 to *ἐπίκουροι* v. 13, the latter possibly meaning Warrant Officers, to fit the theme of the Holy War. It also answers the objection against the punitive expedition in the midst of the wedding preparations. The rebels are rebellious Warrant Officers or even sons of the king because they own a city. Derrett establishes both thematic and linguistic connections between fighting and feasting. Again Derrett shows that the excuses "farm", "merchandise", though not illegitimate for a secular war were not acceptable in the case of a Holy War. This explains Matthew's verb with a debonair ring *ἀπελθόντες*. This would be an unfair description if the excuses were valid so it may assist the case for affirming that a Holy War is involved.

Again Derrett explains why the word *ἐταῖρος* = comrade is used. If a war had not been involved this would be a strange word to use of a man with whom the king had never before been connected. He is a comrade-in-arms or so it was supposed. Further, the Targum ps. Jonathan has visit/inspect for the visit/punish of the M. T. so this explains why the King came in to see (*διασάσθαι*) the guests, an odd thing to do if only a wedding were in question. At this juncture, Derrett does not immediately explain why a soiled uniform is his reason for the man's condemnation, whereas Matthew says it was simply for not having a wedding garment, nothing about the garment being soiled (cf. Is. 64. 6; Zech. 3. 3). Derrett may, however, mean that the connection already noted between fighting and feasting covers this matter.

The surreptitious enemy is disclosed by review. The man "without a wedding garment" is an impostor, an unrepentant idolator. Derrett's view of these verses considerably widens the possibilities of our understanding of the passage.

Jeremias<sup>1</sup> gives two interpretations: first that the garment is repentance<sup>2</sup>, and secondly that arising from R. Johanan ben Zakkai's parable mentioned above. Jeremias favours the latter and writes:

" ... it is clear from the general tenor of Jesus' teaching that he had the second interpretation in mind." He then argues from a string of biblical and other passages<sup>3</sup> that the clean clothing expected in the parable is forgiveness and imputed righteousness.

Via writes:

"The man of Christian faith lives as one who is becoming, in between the radical offer of forgiveness and the demand for radical obedience - the essence of Jesus' message. One must live appropriately to the situation of grace. This is to have a unified self. The invitation of the king to the wedding feast was a gift which internally entailed the demand for clean clothes. The neglect of the demand resulted in losing the gift. The attempt to live within the gift of God while rejecting the inseparable demand to respond appropriately to grace is a misguided effort which splits one's existence and

1 PJ, p. 188f.

2 Loc. cit., p. 188. This arises from Eccles. 9. 8.

3 Jeremias (ibid.) refers to what we read in Is. 61. 10 (a chapter to which Jesus attached special importance); Mt. 5. 3f.; 11. 5 par. Lk. 7. 22; 4. 18f. He proceeds to quote Eth. En. 62. 15f. whereas in Isaiah God (= "the Lord of Spirits" in Eth. En.) clothes the man concerned with robes or garments of salvation and righteousness or Life. Further he refers (loc. cit. p. 189) to Rev. 3. 4, 5, 18; 19. 8; Pistis Sophia 8. 73 which he says, taken with Mt. 2. 21 and Lk. 15. 22, mean that the clean clothing is forgiveness and imputed righteousness. Only two of his first group of texts occur in Matthew, and they say nothing about a garment (nor does 2. 21!). They do have some relation to Is. 61. 10, but it does not follow that imputed righteousness is demanded by Is. 61. The garment there is probably not imputed righteousness but "the righteousness of saints" (Rev. 19. 8) though Green says that "Matthew is paradoxical on the subject of reward" (op. cit., p. 182). There is no "great gulf fixed" in Matthew between righteousness which is a gracious gift and that which is merited (see e.g. 20. 9 and contrast 6. 1).

issues in the loss of the situation where grace is present."<sup>1</sup>

Via's insight seems preferable to Jeremias' interpretation<sup>2</sup> based on a slightly mechanical accumulation of texts (see p. 111 n. 3 above). True, 5. 3 and 11. 5 have some relation to Is. 61. 10, but it does not follow that 22. 11-14 has the same relation, except for the point that the man without the wedding garment probably had a conceit of himself which is the opposite of the humility demanded by Is. 61. It seems that, assuming the garment was dirty, Is. 64. 6: "... all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment", and Zech. 3. 3: "Joshua was clad in filthy garments" would provide an equally valid relation to the man without the wedding garment. Matthew was fond of Zechariah. If we pursued the possibility of this connection we might see that Joshua standing before the altar meant that he was willing to be of service.

What Via brings out so well is the need for active obedience. This is more in keeping with 16. 27, judgement according to works, so typical of Matthew. He seems to call for a more active response than the presumed acceptance of the clean garment implied in Is. 61 and En. 62. While one could not accuse Second Isaiah of lack of interest in ethics (e.g. chap. 58) or for that matter First Isaiah (e.g. chap. 1), chap. 61 appears to give man a rather passive role.

Of course, there is no absolute opposition between Jeremias and Via. In mentioning the gift and grace, Via clearly understands, but Jeremias fails to stress, the apparent refusal of the guest to put on a wedding

1 Dan Otto Via, Jr., op. cit., p. 132.

2 This is not to claim infallibility for Via. He begs the question as to whether grace is being offered. His whole approach is insufficiently based on the parable as a real story. Matthew was not an existentialist.

garment, that is human responsibility. Via is more faithful to Matthew in that he stresses obedience.

Altogether it seems as if Jeremias has made too much of Is. 61. 10 and Eth. En. 62. 15f. Even if Matthew had both in mind in 5. 3 and 11. 5, and he probably did have the former in mind, this does not warrant the conclusion that he had either in at any rate the forefront of his mind in 22. 11-14.

Findlay<sup>1</sup> observes that to refuse a garment offered by one's liege lord is regarded as lèse-majesté and to accept one from another ruler is tantamount to high treason<sup>2</sup>.

It is significant as Findlay<sup>3</sup> notes that apart from its use here (22. 12) one of the only two other occurrences of the word comrade (*ἑταῖρος*) in Matthew (26. 50) is addressed to Judas. Findlay argues from the motto on drinking vessels discovered in various places in the Middle East: " ... comrade why are you here? Rejoice!" that Jesus was almost certainly quoting from this and referring to the Last Supper when he posed the

1 J. Alexander Findlay, Jesus and His Parables, London, 1950, p. 55.

2 This latter fact is probably the true explanation of the unpleasant story about Elisha and Gehazi in 2 Kings 5. 25-27. Gehazi's chief sin in Elisha's estimation was not that he told a lie but that he accepted two changes of garments from Naaman, the representative of the King of Syria.

Findlay goes on to mention that: "'treason' is still known as 'leprosy' by the Arabs" and suspects that: "'a leper white as snow ... ' means 'a double dyed traitor'" (ibid. p. 55f.).

3 Ibid., p. 56f. He further suggests in a footnote that the term was used because Judas was to Jesus as Gehazi to Elisha, his first companion and refers to a possible reading of Mk. 14. 10 "the one of the twelve" = "the first of the twelve" cf. 20. 12 where the leader is "one of them". However, even if this is only a minor buttress its foundation is not firm enough to bear much weight. The variant is not even mentioned by Metzger, op. cit., ad loc. It would have been better to rely on the information given by John (12. 6; 13. 20) that Judas was the treasurer of the band.



question in 26. 50. He surmises that Jesus habitually referred to Judas as comrade.

All this is ingenious, but it leaves out of account the other reference to comrade in 20. 13 where the envious servant can hardly be a table companion of the vineyard owner.

The word 'comrade' may have been simply used sarcastically in 26. 50 and whether 22. 10-12 is a reference to Judas or not does not affect our criterion of judgement. Whoever the man was he was an impostor. The severity and swiftness of the king's judgement on the man is explicable either on the grounds that he could have procured for himself a suitable garment, or that he had refused a garment offered by the king<sup>1</sup>, or that he was wearing the garment of another king. The rage of the king would be irrational if the garment were the man's only garment and he was not supplied with another. If it were the best the man possessed and no gift was available the king in a life-like<sup>2</sup> story could not have been so angry. Therefore, another king's garment was being worn or the man was simply too negligent or too impudent to dress himself properly. Taking Findlay's argument along with that of Derrett we may say that the first is a possibility, for Findlay's extra-biblical facts and his argument from 2 Kings and from the word 'comrade' lend partial support to the argument of Derrett which by themselves are somewhat too pretentious. Thus we may add that the man without a wedding garment was possibly treasonable.

1 This is probably ruled out by what we saw on p. 189, line 1f.

2 Findlay denies that it is a parable. One suspects him of prejudice here (loc. cit., p 57) because he has just evinced a strong desire to read truth into it rather than to find truth revealed in it. The latter is what he believes, correctly, a parable to enable readers to do.

There is nothing explicitly about a holy war in Matthew. But he has possible references. If the sack of Jerusalem by Titus, added by editorial hindsight, is intended in 22. 6, 7 it could be a possibility; 10. 34 ff.; 24. 10 are others. Neither Derrett nor Findlay have built on a broad enough base to be altogether convincing individually, but taking them both and seeing that they give each other a measure of mutual support it is difficult to deny that they could contribute insights into the meaning of this parable insofar as the criteria of judgement are concerned. But neither of them has dealt seriously with the alternative that the garment was the man's own everyday attire.

Manson suggests that: "the one man is meant for some one person - a Judas, or ... a Paul?"<sup>1</sup> But in 20. 12 one represents all and in 25. 14-30 one is again taken as standing for a type.<sup>2</sup>

The safest<sup>3</sup> interpretation is that of Fenton who writes: "The only demand that John and Jesus make is that men should repent in order to enter the kingdom (3. 2; 4. 17): thus repentance expresses itself in a life of good works or charity."<sup>4</sup> This has the advantage of giving in effect the same meaning to the wedding garment as is given to those in Rev. 19. 8; Is. 61. 10. This "called" individual took up the invitation but was not in Schweizer's words: " ... totally there in his heart (vv. 3-8), 'chosen' means persevering to the end 24. 22, 24, 31."<sup>5</sup> His lack of good works revealed the lack in his heart.

1 I cannot agree that Paul is a likely candidate. See Appendix C.

2 Cf. McNeile, op. cit., ad loc.

3 Safest because it needs no special pleading.

4 Op. cit., ad loc. Cf. D. Hill (op. cit., ad loc) who sees the garment as "righteousness". So also Bonnard op. cit., ad loc, "δικαιοσύνη".

5 Op. cit., ad loc.

23. 1-39

Much of this has Lucan parallels (Lk. 11. 39-52). The exceptions are vv. 2, 3, 5, 8-10, 15, 16, 28, 31, 33 and part of v. 34b. The additions by Matthew often indicate Jewishness and always add severity especially vv. 15, 33. Luke has greater severity than Matthew only at 11. 46 where he has "woe" lacking in Matthew (v. 4).

Schweizer<sup>1</sup> takes the woes against the scribes and Pharisees (vv. 13ff.) to be synonymous with curses. In view of the mention of a "child of hell" in v. 15 and of the threat of hell in v. 33 he may well be right. (In both places Gehenna is used, a word more indicative of punishment than Hades.) V. 33 marks a climactic point in the chapter, but it is prefaced by nothing more than the same "woe" which prefates all the other warnings. Seen in the context of 22. 11-14; 24. 36ff.; 25 passim, the chapter might be expected to contain the theme of judgement.

Jeremias<sup>2</sup> argues that as there is a sharp distinction between scribes and Pharisees, Matthew has been inaccurate when he put them both together. Luke (11. 39-52) he claims sets a more accurate<sup>3</sup> tone for (excepting v. 44) he has kept them apart, vv. 39-44 being woes against Pharisees and vv. 46-52 woes against scribes. This understanding is probably artificial as Schweizer<sup>4</sup> observes. There was surely some overlapping and Matthew may

1 E. Schweizer, op. cit., ad loc.; cf. Floyd V. Filson, The Gospel According to St. Matthew, London, 1960, p. 244, who states: "'Woe' expresses burning condemnation", finding an O.T. pattern in Is. 5. 8-23.

2 J. Jeremias, N.T. Theol., Vol. 1, p. 144.

3 There is only one mistake in Luke, according to Jeremias, at v. 43 where Luke makes the Pharisees ambitious for the chief seats, etc., whereas this really characterizes the scribes and Luke himself corrects this in 20. 46f.

4 Op. cit., ad loc.

have been largely correct in ignoring distinctions<sup>1</sup> especially when so many scribes were Pharisaic scribes. If Jeremias' case were valid then scribes would be accused of abusing privileges attaching to their teaching office; Pharisees would be accused more of faults in personal behaviour along the lines of what they felt to be their calling, i.e. to be the "separated ones" in ritual observances and outward walk, halakah. But it is difficult to disentangle those who teach and those who act upon the teaching. R. Akibah who most stoutly affirmed that study is greater than practice (Kidd. 40b) was also a great practitioner of the law<sup>2</sup>. Strictly we are not here considering study so much as teaching and so the same dichotomy as in 7.24-27 ought to have less chance of appearance (cf. Jas.3.1 where James warns against becoming teachers over and above hearers, Mt. 7.24-27), because of the added responsibility of acting in accord with the teaching. In Mt. 5.9, 44ff the idea comes out forcibly that those who do God's will are his sons.

Fenton<sup>3</sup> has an ingenious suggestion that each of the seven woes can be paired off with seven of the Beatitudes (Mt. 5. 3-11, omitting the first Beatitude). Some of these pairings are very telling, especially the second woe: " ... child of hell ..." and the seventh Beatitude " ... sons of God"; the third woe with its threefold reference to blindness and the sixth Beatitude " ... they shall see God"; the fifth woe " ... the outside of the cup and of the plate" and the fourth Beatitude " ... hunger and thirst". These have some bearing on our theme. But Fenton admits:

1 Except in v.26. Further, according to Jeremias, (N.T. Theol., Vol. 1, p. 144f.; The Sermon on the Mount, p.24) the division which Matthew ought to have made is as follows: scribes, vv.1-13; 16-22; 29-36; Pharisees, v.15 "probably"; vv.23-28.

2 See Manson, Sayings, p.229.

3 Op. cit., ad loc.

"Some of these indications of conscious arrangement are very slight and may be purely fortuitous."

### 23.3

In v.3 there is a problem because the command "practise and observe whatever they command you" contradicts Matthew's general position (15.3ff; 16.11-12; 5.21-48; 7.29). This problem affects the criteria of judgement for, if it remains unsolved, we do not know whether scribal rules are among the criteria or not. Bonnard<sup>1</sup> says the discrepancies reflect different stages in the Jewish-Christian polemic. Jeremias<sup>2</sup> helpfully suggests that the command is ironic (if authentic). In this writer's opinion, the best solution would be to take verse 2 in the sense: "In so far as the scribes and Pharisees really sit in Moses' seat, i.e. speak 'ex cathedra', obey them". What is left unsaid here, perhaps because this is written by a different editor from 15.3f.; 16. 11-12; 7.29 and 5.43, in regard to hating your enemy, is that you ought not to observe what they say on the basis of mere human tradition.

We certainly cannot take the word "whatever" without restriction for besides the texts just cited there is the question of Pharisaic neglect of the broad principles of Scripture in 12. 1-21.

### 23. 4-12

These verses, including 3b, may be taken as encompassed by the woes which follow, because they make up the type who is "a child of hell"

1. Op. cit., ad loc.

2 N. T. Theol. Vol. 1, p. 210. He continues: "It is certainly not intended to express a wholesale approval of the Halakah; [for my reservations on this cf. the notes on Mt. 23.23, below] rather the whole stress lies on the second half with its sharp condemnation of the scribes which gives the lie to all their theology." We must agree with the second half of this sentence.

(v. 15) and who will not escape being sentenced to hell. (v. 33).

The Lucan parallel to v. 4 (Lk. 11. 46) is Luke's first woe against the scribes. So the criteria of judgement arising are, first, the heartless overloading of the consciences of ordinary men with heavy legal burdens (cf. Acts 15. 10; Gal. 5. 1 and contrast Jesus' easy yoke, Mt. 11. 33). Those who lay on these burdens make not the slightest effort themselves to bear them. Most likely these are the "weightier matters" (v. 23) but they might also be the minutiae of regulations on, for instance, the Sabbath (see Shabbath passim, Danby pp. 100ff.) which Pharisees found ways of evading and the regulations of which were so numerous that ordinary people could scarcely even know of them all).

The next criterion is ostentatious parade of piety (v. 5). As in 6. 1ff. the point of v. 5a is the motive - "to be seen by men" - not for the love of God or man. The extended use of phylacteries<sup>1</sup> and the lengthening of fringes on their robes (v. 5b) call for comment. Manson<sup>2</sup> takes Matthew's "tassels" as "šššlōth ordained in the law (Num. 15. 38ff.; Dt. 22 12)" and taken together with Mark's "long robes" (Lk. 12-38) they are, Manson says, with good reason, "prayer shawls"<sup>2a</sup>. Thus they con-

1 One would expect a Jew to be interested in phylacteries and this is the only place in the N.T. where they are mentioned. On this matter the Mekilta (1:150ff.) has much to say, but its attitude is much more liberal than that of the scribes and Pharisees mentioned by Matthew. On p. 154 it says: "one who studies the Torah is not obligated (sic) to put on phylacteries." Only a minor "who knows how to take care" of them may have them made for himself. Women and slaves need not wear them (p. 153). Manson (Sayings, p. 230) notes that the Aramaic behind the statement about phylacteries could mean: "they make long their prayers". If we were to adopt this translation it would not affect the criterion of judgement which is ostentation any way. Manson (ibid) states that Matthew is probably right and concluded that the phrase indicates increasing "the wearing of them". "It was," he says, "the Rabbis who extended the wearing to all day."

2 Sayings, p. 230f.

2a The good reason is: "Properly the time to wear them was at prayer and in the performance of certain other duties of the scribes (Billerbeck ii 31ff.)"

trived to give the impression of being constantly at prayer.

Besides, there is love of the honour that comes from men (vv. 6-10) and finally in this section (vv. 11, 12) another warning against self-exaltation and corresponding lack of humility. Evidently they were more interested in an empty show of devoutness than in loving God which was twice commanded<sup>1</sup> in the very phylacteries they wore so proudly and conspicuously (cf. v. 25f.).

Manson<sup>2</sup> notes the importance of the passive "be called" (καλεῖσθαι) in v. 10a. Disciples are to shun acceptance of the honorific titles bestowed on distinguished teachers by Jews. This is over and above the command not to give such titles (v. 9). Manson<sup>3</sup> puts the crux of the matter well, writing: "The community knows no human authorities; God is the teacher". He then refers to Jer. 31. 33f.; Is. 54. 13. Giving and receiving of such honour therefore become criteria of judgement (cf. John 5. 44).

This section sets the tone of declamation against a man-orientated religion, as opposed to a God-orientated one, a strand running through the whole of the rest of the chapter, where regard for the praise of man (cf. John 12. 43) is one of the major criteria of judgement.

1 Deut. 6. 5; 11. 13.

2 Sayings, p. 231f.

3 Ibid., p. 232.

23.13

The scribes and Pharisees presumably made the entry to the Kingdom of Heaven so daunting that they in fact precluded men (cf. v.4a). The entire attitude of hypocrisy made such entry out of the question for these religious leaders themselves.

23.15

To be "a child of hell"<sup>1</sup> unmistakably indicates final judgement. The accused go to great lengths to make one proselyte. Converts are often more fanatically zealous than those who have grown up within the fold. D.Hill<sup>2</sup> suggests that the Pharisees could have made their solitary convert twice as "bad as themselves by teaching him to evade, for instance, the Shammaite law on divorce, by allowing him to divorce his wife because she was not willing to be converted also. This is possible but Matthew may mean his readers to be content with the material in the chapter or at least in the whole Gospel.

In view of the saying in the Mekilta that: "one pious person is produced by the Gentiles each year"<sup>3</sup>, another interpretation is possible which might suggest that the criterion here is exclusiveness - the refusal to accept more than one each year.

23. 16-22

This woe, peculiar to Matthew, reveals an absurd state of mind on the

1 Manson, Sayings, p. 234: "destined for Gehenna", cf. the quotation from Fenton, above.

2 Op. cit., ad loc.

3 Mek. 2.56, Shir 1.3.



part of those denounced. A blind unreason<sup>1</sup> which makes the part greater than the whole or the minor thing more sacred than the major is the criterion here. In vv. 21-22 the obvious fact that the greater includes the less is spelt out, underlining the irrationality of failing to see it. On "heaven", see Is. 66.1.

### 23. 23, 24

V. 23 has a parallel in Lk. 11. 43. These two verses probably do not refer to all of the Pharisees<sup>2</sup>. A magnification of trivialities<sup>3</sup> to the neglect of the really vital things is a cause of condemnation. Moses did not explicitly command the tithing of garden herbs<sup>4</sup> so this seemingly went beyond what was done. It could have been needless and mistaken<sup>5</sup>

- 1 Bishop C. Gore has an epigram which draws together the intrepidity needed to "traverse sea and land" (v. 15) and the blindness of vv. 16ff.: "To be the inheritors of a great tradition [v. 2] gives men heroism, but it also gives them blindness of heart", Sermon on John 5. 43, quoted by William Temple, Readings in St John's Gospel, London, 1952, p. 118. This tends to confirm the disagreement expressed with Jeremias' analysis.
- 2 See Manson, Sayings, p. 97. Oesterley, Sayings of the Jewish Fathers, p. xvii, writes: "The impression is almost irresistible that the denunciations [most numerous in Matthew] of the Pharisees occurring in the Gospel were directed mainly against a Shammaite section." Cf. also Abrahams, op. cit., Series 1, pp. 29-32, where he argues that not all the Pharisees were hypocrites.
- 3 Matthew displays Jewishness by exhorting the fulfilment of the trivia: "without neglecting the others" (v. 23b).
- 4 In Lev. 27. 30, "all the tithe of the land" could conceivably include garden herbs, but what follows: "whether of the seed of the land or the fruit of the tree" might be taken as a definition of "the tithe of the land" or as examples. In Deut. 14. 22f. we read: "You shall tithe all the yield of your seed ...", defined as "grain", "wine" and "oil", (cf. Num. 18. 12; Deut. 14. 22, 23), and this would exclude herbs. For the rabbinic references to the extensions of these texts, see Moore, op. cit., 2. 9.
- 5 Possible justification for these two adjectives comes not from Matthew, in view of what I believe to be the correct interpretation of "without neglecting the other", but from the fact that, as Schweizer (op. cit., ad loc) observes, the whole command and prohibition dropped out of Lk. 11. 42, the Lucan parallel, (i.e. from ταῦτα to παρεῖναι in several of the manuscripts of Luke. Metzger's Textual Commentary (p. 159), however, ascribes this feature of Luke's text "probably" to Marcionite influence. Thus neither Matthew nor Luke necessarily see the tithing of herbs as "needless and mistaken".

and could have showed that the tithers were not really "sitting in Moses' seat" as v.3 has it. Yet, Matthew shows a certain affinity with this scribal outlook in the negative command which McNeile<sup>1</sup> correctly sees as referring to the tithing of herbs: " ... without neglecting the others". McNeile<sup>2</sup> gets to the nub of the matter writing: " ... the Lord [this we may more cautiously replace with "Matthew"] admitted the validity of the latter (the minutiae) when they did not conflict with principles. The positive and negative injunctions perhaps further indicate the relative importance of the two." The paramount matter in Matthew's eyes is to fulfil the broad commands of Scripture (cf. Ps. 33.5; 100.1; Is. 1.17; Jer. 22.3; Mic. 6.8; Amos 5.24; Zech. 7.9)<sup>3</sup>. Matthew (and Luke) may appear here to be Jewish but both go far beyond the rabbinic lack of sensible priorities which is expressed in the Pirke Aboth (2. "Be careful in (the observance of) a precept of minor importance as with (one that is) weighty"<sup>4</sup> or rabbinic legalism: "be not tithing by guess-work" (ibid 1.1b).

1 Op. cit., ad loc: " ταῦτα are the βαπτύματα and ἐκείνα the scribal minutiae".

2 Ibid.

3 On justice cf. The Book of the Secrets of Enoch 42.9: "Blessed is he who judges a judgement justly to the widow and orphan and helps everyone that is wronged, clothing the naked with garments and to the hungry giving bread", Charles op. cit., 2.457, assigned by Charles to A.D. 1-50 (Ibid., p. 429). The last two phrases are relevant to Mt. 25.31-46.

4 The author of this is (Oesterlëy, The Sayings of the Jewish Fathers, p. 15 n.1) R. Judah ha-Nasi born circa 140 A.D., died in 219 or 220 and so much too late for Matthew to be engaging in a polemic against the saying as pronounced by "Rabbi". However, it may well represent the distillation of a view current in Matthew's time.

In the ludicrous picture of the scrupulous Pharisee straining out the smallest unclean insect and gulping down the largest native, also unclean, animal<sup>1</sup>, hump, hair and hooves without a qualm, Matthew probably intends it to be conscious hypocrisy. I have already observed that the contents of the phylacteries twice told the wearers to love God. So the failure of these particular Pharisees to love God must have been partly conscious and here the concentration on unnecessary trifles coupled with the neglect of vital matters (because they were too difficult to fulfil, too weighty, cf. v.4b) in contrast to the smaller duties which, though tedious, were not nearly so demanding, are the criteria of judgement.

Possibly the whole chapter is not a catalogue of self-deception, but of deliberate attempts to deceive others.

- 1 The Aramaic translation of gnat is very like the Aramaic word for camel (Black AAGA, pp. 175f.). A comparable phrase appears in J. Shab 12a: "He that kills a flea on the Sabbath is as guilty as if he killed a camel". It also illustrates the myopia of the scribes and their lack of a due sense of priorities which we noted above in the quotation from the Pirke Aboth (2.1).

#### Additional Note on 23. 23, 24

Weightier (*Βαρύτερος*) is, doubtless, used in the sense of weightiest. Matthew elsewhere used the comparative to indicate the superlative (e.g. 11.11; 13.32), and in the question of the great commandments (22.35) the positive is used when the superlative is intended. So Matthew possibly had in mind Micah's summary of the law: "to do justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6.8). Walking humbly with God may be reckoned to be equivalent to having faith in God, cf. 18. 4-6.

G. Bornkamm (Günther Bornkamm, Gerhard Barth and Heinz Joachim Held, Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew, translated by Percy Scott, (TIM) London, 1963, p.27) writes:

" *πίστις* cannot, in combination with the other two, be understood simply as 'faith', but rather as 'faithfulness', but scarcely as faithfulness to other men (this use would be unique in the whole Gospel), but in the comprehensive sense of behaviour directed towards God, i.e. as faithfulness to His will as revealed in the law and the prophets. Only in this way does the notion add a new element to the other two and the trio become an exhaustive

formula for the essentials of the law. Most important of all, however, it is only from this comprehensive meaning directed towards God that a bridge can be built to the use of *πίστις* and *πίστειν* elsewhere in the Gospel".

The phrase ... "scarcely as faithfulness to other men" might be challenged by the question "why should this exclude faithfulness to God?" The two ought to be complementary (cf. Mt. 22. 37-39). Also, in 7.12, the law and the prophets are said to depend on a rule which concerns treatment of fellow men only. However, we have to agree that the primary concern of faithfulness is to God. G. Barth states (TIM p. 115): "*πίστις* denotes obedience, faithfulness to the demand of God, the law". Bonnard (op. cit., ad loc) agrees with Barth in a fine definition of *πίστις* in this text: "... la soumission joyeuse aux ordonnances fondamentales de Dieu consignées dans les Ecritures".

Matthew's "justice, mercy and faith" is more Jewish than Luke's "justice and the love of God" (Lk. 11.42).

Bonnard (op. cit., ad loc) is of the opinion that the first *καὶ* in v.23 between justice (*κρίσις*) and mercy (*ἐλεος*) is more explanatory than additive, i.e. justice is shown in deeds of mercy. This is very much the line of José R Miranda (Marx and the Bible, A Critique of the Philosophy of Oppression, New York, 1974, pp. 47, 48, 159) who approvingly quotes Prov. 2.3: "do what is justice and right, this is more pleasing to God than sacrifice". Hos. 6.6, he says, is a concentrated expression of the prophets' classic rebuke: "I will not accept your offering and your sacred ceremonies; what I demand is that you do justice to the poor and needy". (See Hos. 8.13; Amos 5. 21-25; Is. 1. 11-17, etc). Miranda also quotes Jeremiah (8. 7-9) to the effect that the law of Yahweh has been falsified, the people who think they possess it are deluded. "Least no less than greatest are out for profit, prophet no less than priest, all practise fraud". This passage, he says, has a parallel in Mt. 23.23 and the distinction made by Jesus: "The important part of the law; justice, compassion, goodness". To translate *πίστις* as goodness is stretching his argument too far. His quoting Bonnard who renders it "faithfulness", Lohmeyer and J. Schmid who render "loyalty", do not support him. However, his O.T. citations in favour of practical justice for the oppressed are apposite to justice and mercy and provide valuable background.

23. 25-28

These verses yield criteria of judgement as follows: the exclusive concern over external appearance coupled with the extortion and rapacity by which the outwardly clean plates were filled and the uncleanness by which the seeming beauty of the tombs was made a hypocrisy; an outward show of righteousness combined with underhanded, corrupt and grasping business dealings together with other forms of sin.

23. 29-36

This passage is probably about final judgement owing to the question in v.33 which Bonnard<sup>1</sup> sees as rhetorical and because the phrase "brood of vipers" appears in 3.7 and 12.34 which are undoubtedly on the theme of final judgement. Moreover, whoever Zechariah<sup>2</sup> was all the righteous blood from Abel to him was a stupendous amount of guilt and v.31 indicates that no change in attitude on the part of the Pharisees had opened them to receive forgiveness. McNeile rightly states: "Their escape is not judicially pronounced impossible,"<sup>3</sup> but the impact of the question must be that if their present attitude persisted, they would harden into children "of hell" (cf. v.15; Rev. 22.11).

To "fill up the measure" (v.32) is: "the eschatological measure"<sup>4</sup> according to Jeremias. The Jews believed that final judgement would

1 Op. cit., ad loc. He believes it means certain final judgement.

2 Green op. cit., ad loc, makes the acceptable suggestion that the confusion of identity is haggadic conflation. The possibilities may be found listed in Green.

3 Op. cit., ad loc.

4 N. T. Theol., Vol.1, p. 84.

come when sin had reached its zenith (cf. Gen. 15.16; 1 Thess. 2.15,16)<sup>1</sup>. It is significant that this verse is peculiar to Matthew.

The simplest and best interpretation of vv. 29-31 is that in v.29 the Pharisees were outwardly honouring the prophets. Jeremias mentions: "a tomb renaissance which flourished at the time of Jesus"<sup>2</sup>. David's tomb was evidently venerated (Acts 2.29). Manson brings out the idea of ossification of the prophetic message excellently when he writes: "The prophets are canonized but woe betide anyone who ventures further on the way they marked out"<sup>3</sup>. Jeremias: "They call on the people to expiate their fathers' murder of the prophets with tokens of atonement." Bonnard comments: "Les pharisiens sont accusés d'annexer pour leur propre gloire la fidélité des grandes figures religieuses du passé."<sup>4</sup> Such understanding means that v.30 is a blatant lie and this is confirmed by v.34.

Derrett proposes another interpretation of v.29, by pointing out that: "... building monuments over the graves of the pious was in itself sinful."<sup>5</sup> This he explains on the next page by noting: "... the deeds of the righteous are their memorial."<sup>6</sup> In a sense construction of tombs of prophets is not so much ... a worship of the dead while one neglects the living word, as denial of the importance of that word ... " He further observes (p.70) that boniym, 'builders' can be read equally

1 Bonnard, op. cit., ad loc.  
Hill, op. cit., ad loc.  
Strack., l. 940.

2 N. T. Theol., Vol 1, p.146.

3 Sayings, p.238.

4 Op. cit., ad loc.

5 J. Duncan M. Derrett, Studies in the New Testament, Vol. 2, p.69  
He cites rabbinic references in support.

6 For rabbinic references, see Schuhl, op. cit., No. 147.

'understanders'. The latter include scholars. He also draws attention to the pun: boniym (builders) and baniym (sons)<sup>1</sup>. "All three claims, to be builders, scholars and sons are figuratively appropriate ..."<sup>2</sup> Derrett refers to: " ... the putting together of three pieces of information, namely that God will require blood, that God sent to the Jews his servants the prophets (Jer. 7.25b), and that the prophets had been murdered"<sup>3</sup> to establish that God would require the blood from subsequent generations (cf. 2 Esd. 1.32; 2.1; 7.60). He proceeds: "Those who do not repudiate, admit. Those who stand by a crime assume responsibility (they stand by the blood: Lev. 19.16) ... To spend money on a tomb when that money was incapable of being paid as compensation, would have been correct practice at Jewish law." (This he establishes from M. Shek. 2.5, Danby p.154). The actions therefore confirmed the unconscious admission concealed in the description of themselves by the learned as 'builders'. Derrett further notes that nephashot " ... does not mean so much tombs as corpses (i.e. murders)"<sup>4</sup>. All this is ingenious but if it were correct one might have expected to find a similar Hebrew or Aramaic pun in the other half of the parallelism " ... adorn the monuments of the righteous", and if it were a synthetic parallelism, the more figurative part ought to have come second, not first. Besides, in v.30 the scribes and Pharisees are said to have flatly denied that they would have shared in the murder of the prophets. If

1 Loc. cit., p.70, 73, cf. M. Black, AAGA, p.12f. who says that the Aramaic behind " ... you are sons of" (Mt. 23.3) and "you are building" (Lk. 11.48) could be rendered either way.

2 Loc. cit., p.73.

3 Loc. cit., p.72.

4 Loc. cit., p.70, see also Schweizer, op. cit., ad loc.

Matthew had interpreted 'building' as does Derrett; one would have expected him to have started v.30 with an adversative - "You do one thing," v.29 (i.e. insult the prophets by building tombs and understanding what you are doing) " ... but you say another" (v.30). However, Derrett's view has the advantage that v.31 with its <sup>cf</sup> ~~NOTE~~ logically follows v.29. It only follows v.30 on the basis of the phrase "our fathers". Matthew apparently seizes upon this father-son relationship and makes it mean that they are acknowledging corporate guilt by the reference to their fathers. But they had just explicitly denied this (v.30). So the denial must be a deliberate lie and on Derrett's hypothesis it is an incongruous lie. On Jeremias' and Manson's interpretation the claim though a lie is at least congruous with honouring the prophets.

Perhaps we may accept the truth underlying the pun noticed by Derrett to the extent that while outwardly honouring the dead prophets the Pharisees were inwardly, actually and consciously opposing all that the prophets had stood for.

Green notes: " ... the ambivalence ... (were the builders identifying themselves with the prophets or with their ancestors?) was an easy target for the controversialist"<sup>1</sup> but Matthew plainly identifies them with their ancestors.

It is notable that filling up "the measure of your fathers" will

1 Op. cit., ad loc.



be accomplished, not by killing the Son (cf. 21.38f.)<sup>1</sup> but by persecuting and killing<sup>2</sup> his emissaries. This is a striking case of identification of Jesus with his missionaries<sup>3</sup>. The killing of Jesus is probably implied in v.38 "your house", i.e. God's no longer, because the veil had been torn in the Temple (27.51). Also in v.39 Jesus warned that they would not see him again till they should exclaim: "blessed ... ". The most probable reason for not seeing him would be his death.

Another link which shows the identification of Jesus with his missionaries is through the blood-guilt which Jesus' foes willed upon themselves at the Crucifixion-trial (27.25) and which Jesus here says will fall on this generation.

- 1 It is perhaps significant that the Son in 21.38f. is killed outside the vineyard whereas in Lk. 12.8 he is killed inside. Is this a reflection merely of Pharisaic scrupulosity by Matthew (i.e. keeping the vineyard free of uncleanness) or might it not have a bearing on Heb. 13. 11-13 (cf. Lev. 16.27) (Golgotha (27.33) being outside the Holy City, the later equivalent of "the camp")? Might Matthew not have been thinking of Jesus as a scapegoat, consigned to the wilderness (Lev. 16.10), utterly forsaken (cf. Mt. 27.46), parallel to John's concept of the lamb of God (John 1.29,26)? Jesus could have been forsaken by God because he was the sin-bearer (26.25) and God cannot look upon sin (Hab. 1.13). If Jesus' enemies believed this their guilt would be increased. They certainly knew that 21.33-41 was addressed to them (21.45).
- 2 On the problem of crucifixion not being a Jewish mode of punishment see Green, op. cit., ad loc.
- 3 Cf. John 15.20; Mt.10.24,25 both in contexts of persecution, most important for my theme and for the possible interpretation of brethren in 25. 31-46 (below p.264ff). Cf. also 1 Thess. 2. 15 where the killing of Jesus and that of the prophets are coupled together. The concept of completing the measure occurs in the Gospel of Peter 5.17 (New Testament Apocrypha, eds. E. Hennecke, W. Schneemelcher, English translation ed. R. McL. Wilson, London, 1963, Vol. 1, p.184). This is in the context of killing Jesus and provides a small but significant link between the slaughter of Jesus and that of his disciples.

Matthew makes the invective against the scribes and Pharisees more specific than that of Luke when he repeats, in v.33, the Baptist's phrase of 3.7 (Lk. 3.7): "you serpents, you brood of vipers" which Luke omits together with the following question: "how are you to escape being sentenced to hell?" and in v.35 Matthew has: "Upon you may come all the righteous blood", whereas Lk. 11.50 is less personal: "the blood of the prophets will be required of this generation".

All the righteous<sup>1</sup> blood will be required<sup>2</sup> as a result of killing and persecuting prophets, wise men and scribes (Luke has "prophets and apostles" in his parallel (Lk. 11.46)). The two groups peculiar to Matthew are specially adapted to appeal to scribes and Pharisees. This makes their horrendous and unjust treatment of Jesus' prophets, wise men and scribes even more blameworthy. Sadhu Sundar Singh<sup>3</sup> once said that Indians need the Water of Life in an Indian dish. Here the scribes are being offered the Gospel by fellow scribes (including Matthew himself?) i.e. in, as it were, a Jewish dish; yet they still refused it.

- 1 The phrase here 'all the righteous blood' is more Hebraic than that of the Lucan parallel (Lk. 11.51b), cf. Joel 3. 19; Lam. 4. 13; see McNeile, op. cit., ad loc.

The Zechariah mentioned in v.35 is probably the martyr of 2 Chron. 24. 20ff. (cf. 2 Chron. 25. 15f.; 36. 15f.) because Matthew's partiality for neat literary arrangements would be consistent with taking a character out of the first (Genesis, Abel) and the last books of the Hebrew O.T.. For other possibilities, see Green, op. cit., ad loc.

- 2 As Schweizer (op. cit., ad loc) suggests, Matthew may have 27.25 in mind. At any rate the idea that spilled blood cries out for vengeance is well-known in the O.T., e.g. Gen. 4.10; 1 Kings 25ff.; Job 16. 18; Is. 26. 21; Ezek. 24. 7-8.
- 3 Janet Lynch-Watson, The Saffron Robe: a Life of Sadhu Sundar Singh, London, 1975, p. 36.

24. 37-42

The theme that runs through from v. 36-51, especially in vv. 39, 42-44, 50, is unexpectedness and therefore lack of vigilance and spiritual unawareness are criteria of judgement common to vv. 37-51. Although the days of Noah were days of sin, this does not seem to be the crux of Matthew's charge against the generation of the Flood. It is probably significant that unlike his reference to Sodom, Gomorrah, Tyre and Sidon (10.13, 14; 11-20-24) where he simply mentions the bare names, here he notes the people's activities which, in Matthew, are surprisingly harmless<sup>1</sup>. Schweizer writes:

"The comparison to the period of Noah sees men as lost, not because they are abysmally wicked, as in Gen. 6.5ff., but because they are thoughtless and take no heed of coming judgement. Men are eating and drinking without taking account of the reality of God, that is, of God's approach to them.

The warning is addressed to respectable citizens who have forgotten the reality of God."<sup>2</sup>

The only objection to Schweizer's line is that the word *τρῶγν* is used for eating instead of *ἐσθίω*, the usual one. The former normally means gnaw or chew. But it occurs in Jn. 6.54, 56, 57, 58, where, though they may imply a crude form of eating, can hardly be called

1 The days of Noah were days of sensuality and lust (Eth. En. 67.10); of unnatural marriages (Gen. 6.2; Eth. En. 106.14); of violence (Gen. 6.11); of heedlessness to warning and of lack of perception (implicit in the Genesis story). The people were godless and unjust (Eth. En. 65.10). They practised sorcery and idolatry (Eth. En. 106.19). For these and other sins, see Sanh. 57a. M. Rab. Gen. XXXI. 2-6 (Friedman, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 240f.). But Matthew neither takes these for granted by a bare reference to these men nor does he specify any of their sins. He refers only to their mundane pursuits. (The prevailing, moral standard must have been low even in respect of Noah whose drunkenness (Gen. 9.21) brings no adverse comment, but Matthew is not interested in that).

2 Op. cit., ad loc.

unspiritual. So we may take it that the munching in Mt. 24. 38, while it may have been hearty, was not necessarily intemperate. Thus, despite the other sins that these people had committed, it is their thoughtlessness, unawareness (Matthew alone says "they did not know"<sup>1</sup>), lack of vigilance and complete absorption with the material (cf. 16. 2) that make up the criteria of judgement.

The minimal description of the two pairs of persons in vv. 40, 41 leaves one to infer that they were outwardly indistinguishable but actually poles apart. The difference must have lain in their attitude which is a major criterion of judgement in Matthew starting with 5. 22, 28. It reappears markedly in 25 as we shall see.

#### 24. 48-51

The phrase: " ... there men will weep and gnash their teeth ... " portends final doom because it also appears in passages where this is signified (Mt. 8. 12; 13. 42, 50; 22. 13). Matthew has added it to the Q version; it does not occur in Lk. 12. 46.

There are some resemblances between the conduct of the servant and that of Nadan in The Story of Ahikar.<sup>2</sup> Both were important in that they

1 The whole verse is absent from Mark and the phrase from Lk. 17. 27. In Ab. 3. 23 we read: " ... the collectors (= angels, says Oesterley (op. cit., p. 45 n. 6)) go round every day to exact payment from a man whether he knows it or not". This particular phrase seems to indicate judgement in the present, but final judgement may be in mind owing to the concluding phrase in the verse " ... everything is ready for the banquet", the banquet, in rabbinical writings, like that mentioned by Oesterley (loc. cit., p. 45 n. 3) meaning: "bliss in the world to come".

2 R. H. Charles, op. cit., (Vol. 2, Pseudepigrapha) pp. 715-784. (abbreviated to Ah. in refs).

were set over others<sup>1</sup>. Both maltreated the others, engaged in self-indulgence and were contemptuous of the master<sup>2</sup>. There is a slight resemblance between the fate of Nadan and that of Matthew's servant, namely in the concept of sundering. Nadan was "torn asunder" (8. 38, Arabic) and died. Matthew's servant was "cut in pieces" (v. 51a)<sup>3</sup>. The element of hypocrisy appears in Ah. 8.32 (Syriac and Arabic) though Nadan is not explicitly said to share the fate of the hypocrites. The date of The Story of Ahikar (fifth century B.C. or before, Charles, loc. cit., p. 715f.) would certainly allow of Matthew's familiarity with it.

The criterion of judgement is plainly irresponsible behaviour, cruelty and self-indulgence<sup>4</sup> combined with lack of watchfulness and unfaithfulness to his charge. The warning is addressed to church leaders, owing to the singling out of one servant in a position of considerable authority.

1 Loc. cit., p. 727ff. (Ah. 1. 11ff.); p.740 (Ah. 3. 1).

2 Loc. cit., p. 741 (Ah. 3. 2; Syriac and Armenian; 3. 1b, 2, Arabic).

3 This leads to an inconsistency for if he had been cut in pieces, he could hardly have wept and gnashed his teeth subsequently. But the verb is probably a misunderstanding of the Aramaic and should have been translated "separate him" (see Jeremais PJ, p. 57 n. 31). If so, this would make better sense and would agree in principle with Mt. 13. 30, 41, 49; 25. 32.

Cf. also D. Hill, op. cit., ad loc, who gives several possible parallels from the Qumran writings for the whole idea of Mt. 24. 51a. The gravity of hypocrisy is evident, cf. Bellet, op. cit., p. 266, quoted on p.167 above.

4 Cf. The Gospel of Thomas 28, "Jesus said: 'I stood in the midst of the world, and I appeared to them in flesh. I found them all drunk, I found none among them thirsting ...' " (Hennecke, op. cit., Vol. 1, p.514).

CHAPTER 425. 1-13; 14-30; 31-46

Features common to the above three passages, appropriate to my theme, can be readily discerned: the significance of the attitude of those judged; the lack of preparation for the critical event (the arrival of the bridegroom, lord, and Son of Man respectively); sins of omission. These are such strong threads running throughout that they might more aptly be called hawsers linking the three parts of the chapter. The latter are, however, sufficiently different in emphasis to merit separate treatment. At the risk of oversimplification, one might claim that lack of hope and the activity which demonstrates it to be genuine hope, lack of faith or faithfulness, and lack of charity are respectively the emphases which mark the difference between the three, but, in the first two, hope and faith overlap each other.

The first may have been derived from Lk. 12.35-38; 13.23-27. It has one point of affinity with Mk. 13.34, the doorkeeper. Mk. 13 and Lk. 12 set the atmosphere of the need for watchfulness. What we make of Lk. 12 has been covered in our consideration of Mt. 7.13ff.; 8.11. It also confirms the finality of the exclusion (Lk. 13.25, 27, 28). The second has some similarity to 24.45-50 though the latter only mentions one servant, in two roles. The second role does not correspond, however, with Mt. 25. 24ff. but in the general concept of dissolute living with the first servant in the Gospel of the Nazareans 18<sup>1</sup>. A parallel which is close at many points is found in Lk. 19.12-27. Mt. 25.31-46 has no parallel at all.

1 Hennecke op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 149. The actual description of this man's conduct has more in common with the Prodigal Son (Lk. 15.15, 30). Moreover, the servant who hid his Lord's money is simply rebuked. The severest punishment, imprisonment, is dealt to the dissolute servant.

Karl Paul Donfried rightly finds a particularly close relationship between Matthew's fifth (23-25) and first (5-7) discourses. "Both are especially concerned with ethics and eschatology"<sup>1</sup>. He notes Borrkamm's<sup>2</sup> demonstration of this relationship throughout Matthew.

1 "The Allegory of the Ten Virgins (Mt. 25. 1-13) as a Summary of Matthean Theology", Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. 93, No. 3, September 1974, (pp. 386-428) p. 419, cf. Via, op. cit., p. 5.

2 "End Expectation and Church in Matthew", TIM, pp. 15-51.

25. 1-13

The interpretation of this parable favoured by several leading modern scholars<sup>1</sup> is simply that disciples should be prepared, be watchful<sup>2</sup>, for the Lord's coming, the parousia, the arrival of the bridegroom<sup>3</sup>.

It seems unsatisfying to hold that the nature of the preparedness or watchfulness is unspecified, especially as it has already been enjoined in Chapter 24. Many commentators would deny us any knowledge of how to prepare. This hinges on what meaning, if any, we may accord to the oil. Some deny that the oil is a symbol of anything. David Hill, for example, writes: "... to see in the word oil a metaphor for spiritual fervour seems to be a piece of over-interpretation."<sup>4</sup> Others are insistent that

1 E.g. J. Jeremias, PJ, p. 171ff.; C. H. Dodd, Parables of the Kingdom, London, 1955, p. 12, Manson, Sayings, p. 242f. See also J. Jeremias, ἈΝΤΙΤΑΔΕΣ Mt. 25. 1. 3f., 7f., Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft, 1965, vol. 56, (pp. 196-201), p. 201, where he compares Mt. 24. 37-39 and par.; Lk. 17. 28-30; Mt. 22. 11-13, and adds: "alle diese Menschen haben es in unbegreiflicher Leichtfertigkeit und Oberflächlichkeit unterlassen ..."

2 This is clearly the primary meaning (v. 13) cf. the partial parallel in Lk. 12. 35-38. The fact that even the wise slept physically is no argument against this interpretation because this kind of watchfulness is rather a quality, an attitude of mind pointing to inner resources. Their sleep was a better preparation for the festivities to follow than wakefulness.

Jesus' twofold rebuke to the three disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane (26. 40, 45) might appear to be inconsistent with this. However, Jesus had evidently only wanted the disciples to watch for one crucial hour, whereas the bridesmaids were expected to watch for an indefinite period. Besides, Jesus' scolding was tempered: first by what amounted to a compliment - "the Spirit is willing", cf. God's saying to David - "you did well that it was in your heart" (1 Kings 8. 18); secondly, by his amazing compassion and understanding - "the flesh is weak"; thirdly, by his silence on the second occasion when he visited them which meant toleration of their lethargy (v. 43) or an acknowledgement that "the flesh is weak".

3 For the O.T. equivalent and the N.T. idea of Christ as the bridegroom, see Manson, Sayings, p. 242.

4 Op. cit., ad loc.



the oil does symbolize something but differ quite widely in their views.

Suzanne de Diétrich writes:

"... the oil here is a symbol of fidelity and perseverance [cf. Manson, Sayings, p. 242]. To be wise in the language of the Bible is to put all one's faith and hope in God - 'the righteous and the wise and their deeds are in the hand of God', Eccl. 9. 1. The fool, the 'senseless' one, is the one who does not believe in God or who lives as though he did not believe in God (Ps. 14. 1; 53. 1-2; Eph. 5. 14-16)." <sup>1</sup>

She then compares the extinguished lamps with the loss of love in 24. 12 and the loss of first love in Rev. 2. 4-5; "The first love is dead and with it dies faith." This is spreading the net rather widely.

E. Schweizer is not so inclusive:

"... to be wise or foolish is not the same thing as having a high or low I.Q. Perhaps the narrator still hears an echo of the Hebrew terminology where wise means "seeing" or "with eyes open" to what is yet to come and do not live simply for the day. They take along an emergency supply of oil, thinking beyond the immediate present." <sup>2</sup>

J. C. Fenton <sup>3</sup> sees oil as a symbol for repentance and connects with 6.17 "anoint your head", i.e. repent of your sins. Bonnard <sup>4</sup> sees the wise as those who are faithful, cf. 24. 45; 25. 23. They had done all that was necessary to await the last judgement. The provision of oil, he claims, means to accomplish faithfully a received mission (25. 14-30) and further, to help the least of the brothers of the Son of Man. This view has the advantage of neatly tying together Chapters 24 and 25 but we may go

1 Saint Matthew, Third Impression, London, 1975, ad loc, p. 130.

2 Op. cit., ad loc, p. 467.

3 Op. cit., ad loc, p. 396.

4 Op. cit., ad loc, pp. 358, 359.

further than that in interpreting the oil without affecting the connection with the context (or indeed allegorizing everything). On Bonnard's interpretation, the first two parables in Mt. 25 are scarcely necessary.

In order to make the oil symbolic of anything, we must first establish the fact that parables may have considerable allegorical content, especially in Matthew. This has been strongly argued by Goulder. McNeile, Black and Hunter allow a measure of allegory in parables as a whole. Some material on this will be found in the Additional Note.

One of the most sane and balanced views on the problem has been put by Black whom to quote will suffice here:

"Differences are of degree and not of kind, and while we must beware of attaching absurd allegorical meanings to details which form no more than the scenic background of a story, we may well be impoverishing our understanding of the parables of Jesus by excluding allegory simply on the basis of the Jülicher canon that the parables are not allegorical. As Dr. Vincent Taylor has written: 'The shade of Jülicher should not affright us from admitting allegory when we see it'. (The Gospel According to Mark, p. 210)."<sup>1</sup>

If we may be allowed to see some allegory here, it will assist us to decide upon the criterion of judgement involved. All must agree that the main thrust of the parable is to be ready and so unreadiness would be the principal criterion. Linnemann writes: "... real readiness should consist precisely in taking into account a lengthy period of waiting." But what does Matthew intend by this? In practical terms, how should we prepare? Since the bridesmaids did not know the time of the

1 M. Black, "The Parables as Allegory", The Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, 42, (1959-60) p. 276, cf. Jeremias p. 3, pp. 66ff.

2 Op. cit., p. 128

bridegroom's arrival, repentance is a strong possibility. Its background in Judaism is secure. R. Eliezer (Ab. 2. 14) said: "... repent one day before thy death"<sup>1</sup>, the point being that no man knows when this will be, so that: "... he should repent every day".<sup>2</sup> For Matthew this would mean a constant state of repentance.

Good works<sup>3</sup> in and of themselves seem to be ruled out because they cannot be accumulated in a way comparable to a swift midnight visit to a shop. This much allegory may be admitted. Grace or the Holy Spirit, coupled with attitude, are more appropriate. Manson writes: "Admission ... does not depend on having lamp or oil but in having them at the precise moment when these things are required."<sup>4</sup> Yet who is to say what will be this moment? Asking (7. 7) *αἰτέετε* must be continuous. A gift of God is a more fitting interpretation than good works simply because it can be asked for in a somewhat similar way to the purchase of the oil (25. 9).

1 He was a pupil of R. Johanan ben Zakkai, in time to influence Matthew.

2 Shab. 153a, (Hoffmann), cf. Eccles R. 1. 7, quoted by Schechter op. cit., p. 341.

3 Chrysostom, loc. cit., ad loc, believes oil to be: "... humanity, almsgiving, succour to them that are in need." This may be accepted in a secondary sense, namely as a result of having oil. Donfried (op. cit., p. 421) finds it likely that the separation of the bridesmaids is related to "the overall theme of practising, observing and doing (Mt. 23. 3; 24. 46; 25. 40, 45)". This reasoning is good and it does not equate oil and good works but implies that they are related. He adds (ibid): "The real danger in Matthew's situation is that most men's love will grow cold" (24. 12) [peculiar to Matthew]. One central point in the exhortation is that 'he who endures to the end (in the performance of love) will be saved' [24. 13]. This connexion is subject to the same objection as urged above against good works. But Donfried goes further still (ibid., p. 427). He finds in the Midrash Rabbah to Numbers (Num. R. XIII, 15, 16) a comment on the phrase "mingled with oil": "This alludes to the Torah, the study of which must be mingled with good deeds ...". He supports the application of this to our passage by reference to the impossibility of transfer (25. 9 cf. 7. 16-20), but the Holy Spirit or grace cannot be borrowed either. To build a case on one midrash is surely to build an inverted pyramid. Moreover, Donfried admits the absurdity of purchasing good deeds from the dealers (25. 9).

4 Sayings, p. 243.

Assuming we admit some allegory in the passage the oil becomes vital for it was this that was deficient, not the lamps. Luther interprets oil variously as grace, faith, the Holy Spirit<sup>1</sup>. Trench<sup>2</sup> believes oil to represent the Holy Spirit.

If we are to defend this interpretation further we may do so by observing that Matthew has a special interest in the Holy Spirit. There are seven references to spirit peculiar to his Gospel: 1. 18;

- 1 On Zech. 4.12 he wrote: "... the oil is the grace of the Holy Spirit" ("Lectures on the Minor Prophets III", ed. Hilton C. Oswald, Luther's Works, Vol. 20, p. 225). This can only be a hint as to what the oil might mean in Mt. 25 because Zechariah specifically indicates that the olive trees which supply the lamps represent the Spirit of God (4. 6). A more telling instance is Ps. 133. 2 where Luther describes the oil that ran down Aaron's beard as: "... the barbarity of the Holy Spirit." (Lectures on the Fifteen Gradual Psalms 1532-1533, Martin Luther Werke, 40, 111, 459. 2ff., 463. 8ff., Weimar, 1883, quoted by Heinrich Bornkamm, Luther and the Old Testament, trans. Eric W. and Ruth C. Gritsch, ed. Victor I. Gruhn, Philadelphia, 1969, p. 41f. On the passage in question, he has allied interpretations though not strictly of the oil: "... the foolish virgins were good in their own resources and not by virtue of grace; ... " (Early Theological Works, ed. T. F. Torrance, The Library of Christian Classics, London, 1955, Vol. XVI, p. 302); in his Evangelien Auslegung, ed. Etmin Milhaupt, Göttingen, 1939, he says in effect that the lack of oil in the lamps means that faith is not in their hearts by grace. In his Devotional Writings, he refers to the lamps which must include by implication the neglect of bringing reserves of oil: "... the lamps of the foolish virgins are equivalent to the righteousness of sham saints." Luther's Works, Vol. 42 (ed. Martin O. Dietrich, p. 36).

Olive oil along with myrrh, cinnamon, etc., are taken elsewhere by Luther to signify graces, gifts and virtues ("First Lectures on the Psalms" ed. Hilton C. Oswald, Luther's Works, Vol. 10, p. 218).

- 2 Cocceius, quoted by Trench (op. cit., p. 252n.) in reference to this parable, held that the Holy Spirit maintained faith in perpetuity. Trench himself is in substantial agreement with Cocceius:

"... in the oil we must get beyond both the works and the faith, to something higher than either, the informing Spirit of God which prompts the works and quickens the faith, of which Spirit oil is ever in Scripture the standing symbol. (Ex. 30. 22-33; Zech. 4. 2, 12; Acts 10. 38; Heb. 1. 9; 1 John 2. 20-27)" (loc. cit., p. 254).

1. 20; 8. 16;<sup>1</sup> 12. 18, 28, 31; 28. 19.

Matthew's many quotations and allusions to the O.T. are well known. It can hardly be denied that he was well acquainted with the passage in Zech. 4 where oil almost certainly means the Holy Spirit, for in v. 6 the prophet writes: " ... not by might ... but by my Spirit says the Lord of hosts." Both Joshua, the High Priest, and Zerubbabel, the Governor, were to be empowered by the Spirit.

Matthew is the most remarkably interested in Zechariah of all four evangelists. He alone quotes five of its verses, 1. 1; 11. 12, 13; 12. 14; 14. 5, and he quotes two more not quoted in the other two synoptics, though they are quoted by John, namely 9. 9 and 12. 10. In contrast there are only two verses of Zechariah that Mark alone quotes and only one referred to by Luke alone. The same cannot be said in comparing the evangelists' use of Exodus (referred to by Trench)<sup>2</sup>. Nevertheless, it can be claimed that Matthew was interested in Exodus and keenly aware of what it said even if Mark and Luke were also very interested. In any case, Zechariah is the key passage, for it actually mentions the Spirit (4. 12), whereas for Ex. 30 it is a matter of interpretation.

The many striking resemblances between Matthew's and Paul's ethical teaching have been cogently set out by Davies<sup>3</sup> and Goulder<sup>4</sup>. May we not observe a similarity between the bridegroom/door-keeper's reply to the late-coming foolish maidens "I do not know you", and St Paul's statement

1 8. 16 does not refer to the Holy Spirit as do the others, but reveals an awareness of the spirit world and the power of Jesus' word in that sphere.

2 Notes on the Parables (op. cit.) p. 254.

3 W.D. Davies, The Sermon on the Mount, pp. 95ff.

4 Op. cit., pp. 153ff.

" ... if any man does not have the spirit of Christ, he does not belong to him" (Rom. 8. 9)? On this subject in general, see Appendix C.

As we saw in our discussion of the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew's ethic is one of grace. To hold that the oil means the Holy Spirit is not to deny that it also involves good works for these are the fruit of the Spirit. In 5. 16 the light is good works but here the oil is the source of the light, cf. Gal. 5. 25f.: " ... the harvest of the Spirit is love, joy peace ... ". Nor should we deny that the main point is to be prepared. I have sought to ask, "How should we prepare?", acknowledging that the meaning, if any, ascribable to the oil is of small significance compared to the immense significance attached by Matthew to the negligent, short-sighted attitude of the foolish bridesmaids which betrayed their lack of real hope.

Thus the criterion of judgement in this parable is certainly unreadiness. Also it may be unrepentance, lack of faith, grace or of the Holy Spirit and the ensuing good works. Lack of the Spirit could be due to failure to ask (7. 7). Oil was evidently available even at midnight (25. 11).

Via, using what he calls "the existential-theological interpretation" has the following comments:

"Gift and demand are held paradoxically together. To see the present as gift alone - the folly of the five - is to be deprived by the future of any present at all ...

The foolish maidens too presumptuously believed that their well-being was guaranteed to them no matter what they did ...

In view of the preparation which they had made, even if inadequate and in view of the future joy of the occasion, we find their abrupt exclusion shocking. This shock suggests the impingement of the divine dimension upon the everyday, the shattering effect of a crisis which breaks into our easy optimism and leaves us without resources."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit., p. 128.

While this is stimulating, we cannot be sure that it is what Matthew intended. Did the foolish bridesmaids see the present as gift? If they did, then they ought to have made more thorough preparation. With them we may compare the one-talent man who failed to appreciate his gift (25.38) or the unforgiving debtor who was prepared to accept mercy but not prepared to do anything about it (18. 33ff.). The false prophets and disobedient professing disciples of 7. 15ff. also had the outward trappings without any substance. Did the foolish really believe anything, even presumptuously? Rather they seemed to assume that they were disciples even though a little reflection would have shown the basis of their assumption to be false. The preparations they had made were less than-minimal. They had it seems simply appeared with whatever oil happened to be in their lamps. Preparation "even if inadequate" is an understatement. St Anselm has an insight which correctly interprets the lack of due preparation: "He (Christ) is not bargained for at a slight price and not all men use him readily."<sup>1</sup>

It may be true that: " ... we find their abrupt exclusion shocking" but is that what Matthew meant to convey? If the bridesmaids knew that their religion was purely superficial then their cry "Lord, Lord open to us" was "vox et praeterea nihil".

It was not the crisis which left them "without resources". They had all along been without resources. The crisis merely disclosed their deficiency.

"I do not know you" was a technical term used by the rabbis for dismissing a scholar from their presence for seven days<sup>2</sup>, i.e. " I will

1 St Anselm's Seven Exegetical Works, trans. by Michael P. McHugh, Washington, 1972, p. 217.

2 Strack-Billerbeck, I p. 469; IV, p.293.

have nothing to do with you."<sup>1</sup> Owing to the references to the end in chapters 24 and the remainder of 25 besides the plain meaning of 25. 10-12 (the door remained shut despite entreaties) the exclusion here is intended to be permanent.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, in 7. 23 a similar phrase is coupled with "depart from me, you who work iniquity", though there the phrase is stronger, *οὐδὲν ὀφείλουσιν* in place of *οὐκ*...<sup>2</sup>

- 1 "Eschatological judgement" (which we prefer to call 'final judgement') is a theme which Donfried (op. cit., p. 421) observes correctly to be "found throughout" [chaps. 24, 25] (Matt. 24. 30-31, 36-37, 50-51; 25. 19-21, 31-33).
- 2 Luke's partial parallel 13. 25 is set in a context of strong emphasis on final judgement (Lk. 13. 27, 28 pars. Mt. 7. 23; 8. 12).



### Additional Note on the Parables as Allegory

In order to justify the search for a possible meaning in the oil and to undergird some of my points of interpretation in other parables, it is desirable to show that an element of allegory may be contained in them. The passage already quoted provides an example of the best of modern thinking on the matter. A key part of this is worth adding as it summarizes the background-material we need: "The Old Testament does not know of any distinction between allegory and parable for the one can easily pass into the other as more than one detail comes to assume symbolic significance ..." (Black, BJRL, loc. cit., p. 276)

McNeile published (1915) a well-balanced statement in the same vein as the above-quoted one by Black. It runs:

"... the tendency to allegorize every detail seen in Philo, Origen and Hilary often leads to strained, even grotesque, methods of interpretation. But the opposite extreme must be guarded against. Jewish utterances must be judged by Jewish not by Greek rules of rhetoric" (op. cit., p. 186).

M. D. Goulder (Midrash and Lektion in Matthew, London, 1974, p. 56ff.) finds a high allegorical content in Matthew's parables. Some of his findings are subject to the warnings of McNeile, Black and Hunter, eg. to see the buckets as heaven in Mt. 13. 47-50 is taking allegory too far. However, some credence must be given to his research.

C. H. Dodd (The Parables of the Kingdom, London, 1935, p. 131) in interpreting the climax of Mt. 21. 33-46 as: "a murderous assault upon the Successor of the prophets" opens himself to Black's charge: "Dodd manages to run with the allegorical hare and hunt with the Jülicher hounds." (BJRL, loc. cit., p. 283)

W. O. E. Oesterley (The Gospel Parables in the Light of their Jewish Background, London, 1936, p. 139f.) provides an approach which illustrates the allegorical method wrongly applied. It is an alleged dichotomy between duty to God and duty to man. He says that the wise bridesmaids put their duty to God first, because they would not give some of their oil to the foolish ones. This is in conflict with the two great commandments (22. 37-40) which are given as if they are inseparable and are joined by the phrase "and the second is like ...". It is also incongruous with the reason for loving enemies (5. 46) namely that God is kind.

Besides, the duty to God and man would not necessarily be mutually exclusive even if Oesterley's explanation were correct. It was not certain that there would not be enough oil if the wise bridesmaids had shared it. This is indicated by the word perhaps (μή ποτε, v. 9). Either the oil can be allegorized by understanding it to mean that some things cannot be borrowed or it is only part of the dramatic machinery of the story which needs no interpretation. Oesterley cannot have his cake and eat it.

The allegorization by the early fathers is well-known and Black gives a striking instance (loc. cit., p. 273). The finest exemplar of

the method just before Jülicher was probably R. C. Trench, Notes on the Parables of Our Lord (op. cit.). Adolf Jülicher, Die Gleichnisreden Jesu, Freiburg i.B, 1886; zweite neubearbeitete Auflage, 1899, 1910, rejected the traditional allegorical method in toto denying any allegorical element in the genuine parables. C. H. Dodd, The Parables of the Kingdom, (op. cit.) accepted his conclusions and Joachim Jeremias, PJ etc., op. cit., has taken the same position.

A. M. Hunter adopts substantially the same stance as M. Black in the quotation above (Interpreting the Parables, London, 1960, p. 94f.).

We may conclude that an element of allegory may be found in Matthew's parables. On the other hand, when Donfried (ibid) argues that since "in all those places where Matthew uses the word ἐγείρω independently of his sources, he is referring to a real rising from physical death (9. 25; 10. 8; 16. 21; 17. 9), it is likely that he intends it to be so in Mt. 25. 7", his case is rather strong. Yet in Mk. 5. 59 καθ' ἐξέδω is contrasted to ἀποθνήσκω. This perhaps illustrates the difficulty that often occurs in establishing a point of allegorical interpretation.

25. 14-30

The *παρ* in v. 14 makes a link with v. 13 and sets the tone of watchfulness. V. 13 contains the word *ὁρᾶν* applying the command "watch" to vv. 1-12, so that we may claim that the two passages vv. 1-13 and vv. 14-30 are rather closely associated. This would confirm, if confirmation were needed, that 25. 14-30 is about final judgement. It also bears upon my theme in that watchfulness must be an overarching criterion of judgement.

The phrase "enter into the joy of your master" is absent from the Lucan parallel. As a wedding feast was reckoned to be a joyful affair (cf. Rev. 19. 9), this may provide another link with 25. 1-13 and it probably indicates the Messianic Banquet<sup>1</sup> and so adds to the element of finality in the parable.

Matthew reinforces the theme and underlines the criteria of judgement he sees by his typical addition of adjectives here, namely "slothful", where Luke has only "wicked", and the addition of the epithet "worthless" at the end, v. 30<sup>2</sup>.

Matthew perhaps does not need to include the command to trade (Lk. 19. 13) for he shows no tolerance of ignorance like that of Luke (Lk. 23. 34; Acts 3. 17; 7. 60; 13. 27; 17. 30).

As in Luke's parallel, interest both by the space devoted and the climactic position, is focussed on the last character, as it is in 13. 3-9,

1 For a weighty number of references to scholars who so believe, see Jacques Dupont, "La Parabole des Talents ou des Mines", Revue de Théologie et de Philosophie, Troisième Series, Tome 19, 1969, p. 380.

Cosmo Gordon Lang, The Parables of Jesus, London, 1906, p. 119 quotes the quaint but attractive saying of Leighton: "It is but little that we can receive here, some drops of joy that enter into us; but there we shall enter into joy as vessels put into a sea of happiness."

2 Cf. the addition of the word evil in Mt. 9. 4, absent from the parallels (Mk. 2.8; Lk. 5. 22). Again Matthew alone has the word wicked in 24. 48 (par. Lk. 12. 15). Unlike Luke he lambastes the scribes and Pharisses with the word hypocrites in 23. 13 etc. Cf. Mark's partial par. (12. 38b-40); and Luke's (11. 39-42, 44, 47-51).

18-23; 20. 1-15 and in Lk. 15. 11-32 on the second, the prodigal son. So while the note of encouragement is strong and the reward of faithfulness blissful, the note of warning of final judgement on irresponsibility is even stronger. This feature seems quite likely to be original to Matthew (and Luke). Abrahams quotes an interesting rabbinic parable<sup>1</sup> in which the emphasis is on the faithfulness of God reflected in that of man.

The primary purpose of v. 30 is to relate the whole passage to the end of time and make it one of final judgement because in Matthew's phraseology elsewhere "outer darkness" (8. 12; 22. 13), "... weep and gnash their teeth" (8. 12; 13. 42, 50; 22. 13; 24. 15) always relate to the end. This being Matthew's habitual usage, it would be difficult to contend that "outer darkness" simply means banishment or deprivation of employment. Thus, the mention of "outer darkness" (v. 30) seems further to show that, whatever the original intended, the editor<sup>2</sup> intended the passage to be interpreted allegorically, because to consign someone to outer darkness is beyond the power of a human monarch.

Dodd writes: "The return of the master signifies the second advent of Christ and the parable is on the way to becoming an allegory."<sup>3</sup>

One might think that Dodd could have held the delay of the master's return as simply part of the dramatic detail or perhaps as something which

1. In brief this parable runs as follows: Men with two seahs of barley deposited them with R. Phineas ben Jair who went on sowing them year after year; he made a granary and stored the increase. After seven years they returned and R. Phineas recognised them and said: "Come take your stores. Lo! from the faithfulness of flesh and blood you recognise the faithfulness of the Holy One, blessed be He."

2 This is assuming the verse to be editorial as W.O.E. Oesterley (The Gospel Parables in the Light of Their Jewish Background, London, 1936, p. 149) considers likely and Manson (Sayings, p. 248) affirms. "Outer darkness" is unique to Matthew, "weep and gnash ..." occurs elsewhere in the N.T. only once (Lk. 13. 28).

3 Op. cit., p. 248.

underscored the testing of responsible attitude. This is the reason adduced by Schweizer<sup>1</sup>. It seems, however, that if even Dodd can admit that "the parable is on the way to becoming an allegory", we may be entitled to claim that the departure of the Lord is the Ascension and his return the Second Coming. Manson<sup>2</sup>, though denying any special significance to the talents, takes the master as God and the other country, heaven. This is strange because Scripture does not picture God as leaving the earth to go to heaven<sup>3</sup>. Jesus, however, did go up to heaven, and, while Matthew does not directly mention the Ascension, the likeness between this parable and Eph. 4. 8 is striking, the departure and the giving of gifts are features common to both Matthew and Paul.

It seems possible that a talent represents a spiritual gift of some kind, that the lord, the giver of the gift, is Jesus, the servants are the faithful or fearful - Jews in the first instance. The one talent man may represent initially the scribes and Pharisees.

Dodd holds:

"In the Old Testament and in Jewish usage the relation of God and Israel was so constantly represented as that of a "lord" and his "slaves" that a hearer of the parable would almost inevitably seek an interpretation along those lines."<sup>4</sup>

The condemned servant, Dodd suggests, is "the type of pious Jew (who) seeks personal security in the meticulous observance of the law."<sup>5</sup> This is

1 Op. cit., p. 153.

2 Sayings, p. 246.

3 Such a passage as Gen. 18. 21 when the Lord says: "I will go down and see ..." is obviously anthropomorphic, for in the event the visit was done by angels (Gen. 19. 1ff.).

4 C. H. Dodd, Parables of the Kingdom, op. cit., p. 151.

5 Ibid.

probably correct in view of 23 *passim*.

Matthew represents the scribes and Pharisees as unprofitable, unproductive of good, and they serve as a warning to others of the same sort.

Oesterley<sup>1</sup> thinks that the talents are grace, but it is odd to imagine grace as quantifiable in the way described here (though Paul speaks of "... the measure of faith" Rom. 12. 8 and: "... beyond our measure" 2 Cor. 10. 13, 15). It seems more likely that Matthew is talking of something akin to what Paul calls: "... spiritual gifts" (1 Cor. 14. 1). While for Paul each individual (Rom. 12. 4ff., 1 Cor. 8. 12ff., Eph. 4. 11f.) has one gift whereas here two of the servants have five and two, it is unlikely that Paul's sayings could be pressed to mean that each individual could only have one gift. He himself had the gift of Apostleship, exhortation, teaching and prophecy, to name only a few.

Cosmo Lang has suggested that one gift might be "the instinct for religion"<sup>2</sup>, two parts of which he names as study and prayer. The latter is appealing because where only one talent was given a potentially universal gift would be a more appropriate interpretation than something more specialized. This view is supported by comparison with Lk. 19. 13ff. where, though the sum is very much less (perhaps partly due to the less affluent society in which Luke wrote), each servant only receives one mina. At the same time we must note that in Luke the nobleman gave only a small part of his money, for several cities were in his power to bequeath (Lk. 19. 18, 19), whereas in Matthew the master evidently gave all he had.

1 Op. cit., p. 149.

2 Cosmo Gordon Lang, op. cit., pp. 109-111.

Thus it may be that Lang's idea of study ought to be included in the one talent as it was so large a sum, despite the fact that everyone is not capable of study.

The least challengable interpretation of the talents is Manson's: "The goods may be anything in the world, the whole raw material of man's work conceived as a service to God."<sup>1</sup> I am inclined to accept this because the nub of the matter is not to discover the spiritual equivalent of a talent if it has one, but to expound the attitude of the one-talent man. This was in effect: "I'm not going to weary myself by enterprise, nor take the risk of losing all with certain condemnation to follow, nor even put your money in the bank, because I begrudge you the interest that would accrue." (The last may have been unconscious.) Though he said he was afraid he was not sufficiently afraid to plan a minimal gain for his master. Though the money was safe in the ground<sup>2</sup> it would have been equally safe (in the sense that he would not have been liable for its loss) in the hands of the money-changer.<sup>3</sup> His reasoning was badly at fault (cf. Mt. 12. 1-28) because, his opinion of his master's character

- 1 Sayings, p. 246. They cannot be good works for men are not presented with a stock of good works but with the ability (v. 15b.) to produce them.
- 2 b. Baba Metzi'ah, 42a. See Jeremias, PJ, p. 61 n. 51; Schweizer, op. cit., ad loc. The talent would not have been safe in a napkin (Lk. 19. 20) but as it was evidently change (25. 27), a napkin could hardly have accommodated it.
- 3 Baba Metzi'ah, 3. 11 (Danby, p. 352).

being what it was: "... a hard<sup>1</sup> man ..." (v. 24), his action was quite inappropriate.

Alongside, and included in, Manson's understanding we may set the appealing possibility suggested by Dupont<sup>2</sup> to the effect that the fault was refusing to engage in Jesus' missionary enterprise. This would be consistent with the demand for the abandonment of immediate security<sup>3</sup> in Jesus' teaching which Matthew, in 10. 39; 16. 25, for example, stresses by repetition, whereas Mark and Luke have it only once, Mk. 8. 35; Lk. 9. 24. The sower (13. 3-9, 18-23 and pars.) was obviously prepared for much loss. It would also be consistent with 24. 14; 28. 18-20.

Matthew is teaching that overcaution, a bad opinion of God and a rigid legalism which seeks to give God only his bare due: "Here you have what is yours"<sup>4</sup> (v. 25b.) is extremely culpable. Mere avoidance of loss, mere negative goodness is grossly inadequate. Possibly Matthew is hinting: "Jewish tradition says your service is safe circumscribed in the dry ground (cf. Is. 53. 2) of that tradition, but I am telling you it is damnable."

- 1 This was far from the case. Although the master expected a return on his gifts, he apparently did not seek to repossess them, in the first two cases, or their increase. The man with ten still had them when given an eleventh gratuitously. Even if this were an interim measure the reward (vv. 21. 23) was quite out of proportion to the outlay. So the tone set by the master is that of a bountiful giver, giving far beyond the bounds of legal niceties.

The concept of God as "a hard man" cuts at the root of what Matthew has taught of His generosity: sending sun and rain (5. 45); feeding the birds (6. 26); clothing the lilies (6. 30) and, like the a fortiori arguments arising from these two, giving good things to those who ask (7. 11); remitting enormous debts (18. 27), etc.

- 2 Op. cit., p. 385.

- 3 The call here is not to abandon final security. In what follows it is evident that the material loss is quite disproportionate to the spiritual loss which will ensure if the surrender is not made.

- 4 This phrase ἡμεῖς τὸ σὸν is stronger than Luke's parallel (19. 20) ἡμεῖς σου.



In Luke (19. 13b) the servants are ordered to trade; in Matthew they are given no instructions. May this not signify that we are in a realm where law does not apply? May it not mean that Matthew knows that servants must go beyond the law? He has already made this plain in the antitheses of Chapter 5 (cf. Gal. 5. 23b).

Matthew also omits the statement (of the nobleman) in Lk. 19. 22a: "I will condemn you out of your own mouth". Perhaps Matthew feels it is obvious enough, as the servant was so condemned. His word about the Lord was a deceptive word (cf. 12. 36 and the remarks thereon).

It is notable that the one-talent man is described as wicked and slothful (25. 26). The combination of these two adjectives emphasises the sin of omission. The second, though Matthew does not stress secular works (cf. 6. 26ff.), is superficially at least, reminiscent of some of the Proverbs, especially: "He that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster" (Prov. 19. 9 A.V.). Matthew's literal point cannot be concerned with physical laziness for as much or more effort would be needed to bury a large number of coins as to take them to the bank. Matthew is not extolling work for work's sake<sup>1</sup>, but is referring to an indolent attitude, coupled with fear of loss<sup>2</sup>, which makes the servant

1 Bonnard (op. cit., ad loc) puts it: "... la parabole ne prône pas le travail pour le travail."

2 In Prov. 22. 13; 26. 13 the fears are probably imaginary and are fears of loss of life used as excuses for not going out to work; in Matthew, fear of losing the talent. In spite of these differences, it is perhaps significant that the word slothful in these two texts and in Prov. 26. 16 is ἀσθητός in the LXX. This does not indicate that Matthew was as concerned about ordinary work as the Proverbs, but that, as he uses the same word as the LXX translators for slothful, he is profoundly concerned, as were they, with the attitude which made a man lazy.

refuse to hazard his own security on his master's behalf. To seek a spiritual counterpart for the bank may be allegorizing too much, but it is possible that it means going into partnership as a subordinate to some more gifted disciple or community of disciples. Matthew's special interest in the Church 16. 18 and in 18. 17, 19, 20 the gathering of disciples (all of which are peculiar to him) might tend to indicate the latter alternative. Besides, he claims that his Lord has not sown and not winnowed (v. 24b). This is false because the master had given him a talent; that much had been sown. It was a vast sum.<sup>1</sup> The slothful man in Matthew was, therefore, self-opinionated. "I knew you" prefaced his character-sketch. It never occurred to him that his assessment might be mistaken. Like the sluggard in Proverbs he was: "... wiser in his own eyes than seven men who can answer discreetly" (Prov. 26. 16). Matthew's servant is not utterly lazy, for hiding the talent would involve more work than taking it to the bank. It is the unholy combination of sloth with an evil attitude to his master which make up the criterion by which he is consigned, with as we have seen typically Matthewan expressions, to hell.

May we not suspect that envy entered into this least gifted man's attitude to God?<sup>2</sup> Amplifying his saying we might arrive at something like

1 6,000 - 10,000 denarii. This fact makes the phrase "a few things" vv. 21, 23 seem incongruous. But probably it is intended to be seen as relative to "the joy of your lord", in which case "few things" is accurate. Or it may be evidence of two editors. See Additional Note on Comparative Money Values, pp. 127ff. above.

2 Matthew's interest in envy is seen in Mt. 27. 18 par Mk. 15. 10, absent from Luke. In Matthew praise is accorded to both of the first two servants in identical terms. In Luke the note of praise is lacking in the case of the second servant. This is a small indication that Matthew leaves less room for envy, though of course the initial gift granted to the second servant was less whereas in Luke it was the same - one pound (mina, Lk. 19. 13).

this: "You gave one five; another two; only one to me. If you want a return look for it from them. You cannot expect a return from your paltry and negligible gift to me!"

Since the wretch felt he had received so little he did not give any service. The other two begrudged neither service nor the rendering to their master of all that they had gained by their efforts. The two-talent man was not envious of the greater gifts of his more able fellow even when the eleventh talent was gratuitously<sup>1</sup> added to his ten, whereas to the four nothing was added. Moreover, the five-talent man accepted the extra talent with silent assent. Both the faithful servants are aware of the gracious nature of their master.

The criteria of judgement here are sloth, overcaution, unreason, fear possibly envy and false words, arising from a hostile, grudging, legalistic attitude and a failure to watch for the Lord's return with appropriate action. These are connected with different reactions to the receipt of God's gifts. The good servants recognised that nothing could be done unless the master had first given them a free gift. They are aware of the nature of grace. In his perverse contradiction of the graciousness of the master, the condemned servant may be likened to Jesus' enemies in chapter 12.

Besides the energetic use of God's gifts, humble acceptance of them must be placed among the criteria of judgement. "What have you that you did not receive?" asks Paul (1 Cor. 4. 7) and Deuteronomy affirms that the power to get wealth is a gift of God (Deut. 8. 18).

For Matthew the gift of God comes first, the human effort after it. In this he is not different from Paul (see e.g. Eph. 2. 10).

1 Possibly on the basis of the one-talent man's opinion of the master. But the talent was his in the first instance and he was entitled to do with it as he saw fit.

Additional Note on 25. 14-30

Jeremias (PJ, p. 62) claims that the talents are the word of God (and refers to 1 Tim. 6. 20; 2 Tim. 1. 12, 14 where the word is likened to a deposit), but the difficulty with this is the variation in amount. Possibly he means the word of God wedded to the ability to understand it. If we were to accept his interpretation we would have a problem with Luke (19. 11-27) for it might mean that to him the word of God was very much less valuable than to Matthew (though the reason may have been that he was writing in a less wealthy milieu as has been observed above). Luke's pounds would better suit Jeremias' understanding in so far as all the servants in Luke received the same amount. Therefore I am inclined to believe that Jeremias would be correct if he applied his exposition to Luke's version and wrong when he applies it to Matthew's. For Matthew, the capacity of each servant is a major factor from the start, but Luke assumes all have equal capacity. In Matthew the lord entrusts all his property to his servants; in Luke only some of it. Might there not be a hint of that identification of the Son of Man with 'the least' that we find in Mt. 25. 31-46? A man's name or personality was often associated with his possessions. This is part of the point of the Levirate law (Deut. 25. 8-10)-the connexion of which with property comes out clearly in Num. 27. 1-11; 36. 1-12 esp. v. 12 and in Ruth 4. 5b. In Ps. 49. 11 the wicked seek to promote their names by so calling their possessions.

25. 31-46

The passage represents a mountain peak of ethical challenge, whatever interpretation of the least of the King's brethren is accepted. If " ... love one another as I have loved you" (John 13. 34; 15. 12) is the Mount Everest of ethics, Mt. 25. 31-46 deserves to be placed in the same range. The love with which Jesus loved the world and which disciples are to show to each other (cf. Jn. 3. 16; 13. 34<sup>1</sup>; 15. 12) is in Mt. 25. 31-46 made very specific and made to refer to the humblest deeds of charity. It takes a very practical and material shape as indeed it does in John 13 and in 1 John 3. 17 (cf. Jas. 2. 15f.). The deeds approved are so rudimentary as to be apt to be neglected. Somewhat paradoxically this may make them of supreme importance. They are also within the capacity of most people.

Owing to its strong eschatological content, its position in the Gospel at the end of the teaching material and its universal embrace, it is a key passage in my study.

We cannot take time to delve at length into the composition of the passage. Perhaps the only genuinely parabolic<sup>2</sup> element in it is that

- 1 The preface here: "a new commandment ..." would probably not have been objected to by Matthew. It is doubtful whether he intended, in the Sermon on the Mount, to propound a new body of law because his phrase at the fulcrum of each antithesis is "it was said" 5. 21 etc. not "it is written". It seems that he is contrasting Jesus' teaching not only with the elementary law of God but with the oral tradition of the elders. His choice of phrase must be significant as he is so fond of the phrase "it is written". Thus, while the phrase "a new law" might have been objectionable to him, a new (καινός), hitherto unknown, strange, remarkable commandment, is another matter. Indeed, if what we have noticed about the Gospel preceding the Sermon is correct (see p. 56) then he would heartily endorse the Johannine phrase.
- 2 If we use the term parabolic we do so advisedly. Opinions differ widely. Green, op. cit., ad loc " ... really no parable at all"; Hunter, WWJ, p. 111, "an allegory"; Geraint Vaughan Jones, The Art and Truth of the Parables, London, 1964, p. 106: "no more and no less a parable than the other parables"; J.A.T. Robinson, "The 'Parable' of the Sheep and the Goats", Twelve New Testament Studies, S.B.T., London, 1962, p. 34: "... it is not properly speaking a parable at all, but a combination of parabolic apocalyptic and ethical teaching." The last is probably the safest and soundest view, cf. Jeremias, PJ, p. 20 f.

of the image of the shepherd dividing sheep and goats. These verses (32, 33) are probably based on Ezekiel 34. 17. The switch of titles Son of Man (v. 31) to King (v. 34) is abrupt<sup>1</sup> and may indicate separate sources.

The word king is a favourite Matthaean word. Though he normally uses it of God, he does show a marked interest in Jesus as King of the Jews (2. 2; 21. 5). References to this title (or the title, King of Israel) at the trial are common to all four Gospels, and Luke (1. 32, 33) has a parallel of sorts to the title of Mt. 2. 2. So we cannot claim that the thought of Jesus as king is absent from the minds of the other evangelists.

However, when we take 2. 2 and 21. 5 together and find that in Matthew it is "your (  $\sigma\sigma\upsilon$  ) king", "the daughter of Zion's king", whereas in the Lucan parallel (Lk. 19. 38) it is the (  $\delta$  ) king, the evidence is quite significant that Matthew had a special liking for applying the title to Jesus. Besides, Matthew has two other parables (18. 23ff.; 22. 2ff.) in which a king figures; Mark, none; Luke, only one (Lk. 14. 31ff.).

I propose to deal with this passage in four sections: 'The Son of Man, 'all nations', 'the least' and the attitude which is found to be culpable. The reason for considering the first at this juncture is that here (25. 31) the Son of Man appears, in relation to my theme, at the pinnacle of his exaltation<sup>1</sup>.

1 The term also figures in 13. 41 where it represents the zenith of power, but there no clear criterion of judgement emerges.

## THE SON OF MAN IN MATTHEW

A new era in the study of the Son of Man began in 1973 with the publication of G. Vermes' Jesus the Jew with its chapter on the Son of Man<sup>1</sup>. His thesis is not entirely unprecedented. In his article given in full in Matthew Black's Aramaic Approach (pp. 310-315) he freely acknowledges prior hints of the same findings in the work of other scholars, and Black had forestalled him to some extent in an article to which Black refers (AAGA, p. 328, ET, 60, 2, '58-'59). Vermes' findings, arising from evidence, as Black observes, "clearly and convincingly set out", and based on more thorough and comprehensive research than anyone had done till then<sup>2</sup> are in sum as follows:

"Son of Man in Jewish Aramaic appears frequently as a synonym for man and as a substitute for the indefinite pronoun, more seldom as a circumlocution by which the speaker refers to himself."<sup>3</sup>

"The Biblical Aramaic idiom, one like "a Son of Man" in Dan. 7. 13; though not individual and messianic in origin, acquired in course of time a definite messianic association. However, none of the interpretative sources employ it as a title or place it in the lips of a speaker as a self designation. The word "like" hints not only at a similarity to man, but even more at a mysterious dissimilarity."<sup>4</sup>

This last sentence and the remark about a definite messianic association do not seem to be far from the point of view adopted by Matthew Black, namely:

"This idiomatic substitute for the first person does in fact receive eschatological overtones in Jesus' employment of it."<sup>5</sup>

Black<sup>6</sup> disagrees with Vermes that Aramaic barnash is not suitable

1. Geza Vermes, Jesus the Jew, London, 1973.

2. In AAGA, pp. 315ff. this is obvious.

3. Jesus the Jew, p. 176.

4. Ibid., p. 170.

5. AAGA, p. 238.

6. Ibid., p. 329f. (barnash, sic). Vermes (AAGA, p. 315 states: "... the employment of the definite, barnasha, or indefinite, barnash, form does not substantially affect the meaning."

for messianic use. Perhaps we might go some way towards reconciling these two views by saying that its very unsuitability makes it suitable. This may not be what Black means, but he comes close to Vermes' position in the first part of the following sentence:

"No term was more fitted to conceal, yet at the same time to reveal to those who had ears to hear, the Son of Man's identity."<sup>1</sup>

After considering the use of Son of Man in the Book of Parables of 1 Enoch<sup>2</sup>, Vermes says:

1 AAGA, p. 211.

2 J. C. Hindley ("Towards a Date of the Similitudes of Enoch - An Historical Approach", NTS, Vol. 14, July 1968, No. 4, pp. 557-565) puts forward an impressive array of examples from history to show that the literature dates from the early second century A.D. More recently J.T. Milik (The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumran Cave 4, Oxford, 1976, pp. 89-107, cf. "Problème de la littérature Henochique à la lumière des fragments araméens de Qumran", The Harvard Theological Review, Vol. 64, 1971, pp. 333-378) has dated the Similitudes even later, to around 270 A.D. This has not commanded the assent of other scholars, but even so, the tendency is to place this section later than the writing of Matthew. See even more recently two articles which appear consecutively as follows: M.A. Knibb, "The Date of the Parables of Enoch, a Critical Review", NTS, 25, (3, 1979) pp. 345-359; C.L. Mearns, "Dating the Similitudes" *ibid.*, pp. 360-369. An example of the older view is W.O.E. Oesterley, who, writing in the Preface to The Book of Enoch, ed. W.O.E. Oesterley and G.H. Box, trans. R.H. Charles, London, 1917, p. xix, dates them circa 105-64 B.C. In a forthcoming article "The Composition, Character and Date of the Second Vision of Enoch", Festschrift für Prof. K. Aland, ed. Walter de Gruyter, M. Black dates the proposed Hebrew Urschrift for the Book of the Parables to the early Roman period, probably pre-70 A.D. It is specially significant that the Cave 4 fragments covered every chapter of 1 Enoch except the Book of the Parables. So we may be back in the position of claiming that Matthew might have been influenced by this literature.

In any case, we may find some value in the Similitudes for our purpose, as Vermes evidently does, because they serve to show how the term Son of Man was used at some time fairly close to that of Matthew.

It is possible that there was in the first century an oral tradition of apocalyptic sayings from which both drew. Certainly it is a commonplace fact that Jesus' apocalyptic imagery was deeply coloured by the prevailing Jewish traditions.



"The Son of Man is not an independent entity in any of these passages, but always requires added definition."<sup>1</sup>

May it not be the case then over all its uses that it is a neutral term which has to be invested with meaning according to the context?<sup>2</sup>

Among Vermes' most telling points is the fact that the use of the Son of Man "engendered no hostility and raised no objections from Jesus' enemies".<sup>3</sup> This has not been answered by Black or by any other scholar. If the Son of Man had been a recognized messianic title there would undoubtedly have been angry reactions as there were at the alleged use of the title Son of God (Mt. 26. 63-65; and pars.).

"Would the saying be intelligible to those for whom it was intended without the expression being a messianic title?"<sup>4</sup> asks Black, but one does not need to go that far. The point is not necessarily that the Messiah is being rejected but that people reject the good in various forms. They dismissed John's asceticism as demon-possession and the Son of Man's enjoyment of simple pleasures as gluttony, etc. To provide the contrast a man equal to John would be quite adequate to the sense of the passages and the understanding of the audience.

1 Jesus the Jew, p. 174 .

2 The word *ἀγάπη* provides an interesting analogy, a rather flavourless, nondescript word for love in classical Greek, yet invested by N. T. writers with the immense meaning of the love of God in Christ and of that same love operative between Christians.

3 AAGA, p. 310. See also Jesus the Jew, p. 161, where he writes "Among friends and adversaries it (the expression, 'Son of Man') arouses neither enthusiasm nor hostility."

4. AAGA, p. 211.

Out of the hundreds of examples of the use of barnash scrutinized by Vermes not one suggested that it was ever used as a messianic title. He continues: "... although Dan. 7. 13 had been recognised in Judaism as a messianic text and had served to create a new messianic name, this was <sup>בן נא</sup> (Cloud-Man), possibly also <sup>בן נא</sup> (veφeλγ = Son of the Cloud) but not <sup>בן נא</sup> Son of Man ... all the available evidence points to the unsuitability of bar nasha as a name or a title."

In Ezekiel the frequent use of Son of man in God's address to the prophet might have encouraged us to believe that some special aura of divinity clings to the phrase since the man so addressed was a chosen prophet. This belief has been robbed of its basis by Vermes' researches. He points out that "whereas the Hebrew <sup>בן אדם</sup> appears no less than eighty-seven times in Ezekiel, as a form of divine address the Targum always translates <sup>בן אדם</sup> as <sup>בן אדם</sup>, Son of Adam not as <sup>בן אדם</sup>"<sup>1</sup>.

We have spoken of the phrase being one susceptible to an investiture of meaning. The analogy of the horse and rider may serve us. When the Spanish Conquistadores entered Mexico the aboriginals thought the horses and riders were in each case single creatures. If the phrase Son of Man is taken to be the horse, a common-place horse (as Vermes describes the Son of Man with that adjective) and the rider, the meaning, then it will not do for some to say that only one single combined phenomenon is before them. The rider is the part of the combination which provides the personality and direction, but this does not mean it cannot be replaced by another rider. The leading

1 AAGA, p. 327f.

question of the high priest and its answers (26. 63-65) provide an illustration:

"Tell us if you are the Christ, The Son of God" ... "Hereafter you shall see the Son of man seated at the right hand of Power."

If Jesus had simply desired to impress his enemies with his claims then he might have used the personal pronoun or echoed their phrase. Though there is no evidence that the chief priests and scribes objected to Jesus' use of the phrase Son of Man, they did object strongly to the claim made for him by others that he was the Son of David (21. 15) and here (26. 65) the claim to be Son of God was to them nothing short of blasphemy. This tends to show that 'Son of Man' had a certain indefinable quality in the minds of Jewish leaders.

The crowd ( *ὄχλος* ) according to John 12. 34 shared this rather vague concept. "Who is the Son of man?" they asked of Jesus who had just said, "I must be lifted up". Strachan writes of this verse:

"Of 'Son of man' as a popular title of Messiah there is no sign."<sup>1</sup>

John evidently wants his readers to know that there is a double entendre in the concept of lifting up but he does not mean that the people understood that. They found difficulty in identifying the Son of Man with the Messiah according to C. K. Barrett<sup>2</sup>. The attitude of the people seems to be quizzical. If they had been able to put a definite content into the term "Son of Man" they would probably not have posed their questions in this way.

The lack of hostility towards the term being applied to Jesus in the people's question contrasts strongly with the outrage of the High Priest

1 R. H. Strachan, The Fourth Gospel, London, 1941, ad loc

2. The Gospel According to St John: an Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text, London, first published 1955, tenth impression 1975, pp. 356f.

over his question concerning "Son of God" and its answer (Mt. 26. 63f., and par.). Making allowance for the fact that the crowd bore less responsibility than the leaders and presumably used words with less care than more educated people, the instance in John 12. 34 still tends to show that Son of Man in general was in itself a somewhat neutral term.

Whatever is said of the attributes of the Son of Man in the N.T. is really said of Jesus. Thus, if we say "the Son of Man means Man", it is a shorthand way of saying that when Jesus uses the term Son of man He means that He is Man. When we agree then with any pre-Vermes scholarly findings on the attributes of the Son of Man we do so with the proviso that the Son of Man be not regarded as an entity with some built-in rigid meaning, independent of its N. T. context, but rather as a riderless horse entering the N. T. to find its fulfilment, like *ἀγαπᾶω*, almost a tabula rasa upon which the evangelists could imprint what they wished.

For our present purpose, then, what we prefer to ask is, "what meaning did Matthew put into the term, 'Son of Man'?" rather than, "what is the meaning of the Son of Man in Matthew?" This will enable us to take Vermes seriously without airily dismissing other scholarly work on the question. We are, however, entitled to dismiss the work of any who obviously fail to take heed to Vermes' premiss,

"Since the Son of man is not a Greek phrase, but Aramaic, if it is to make any sense at all it must be Aramaic sense".<sup>1</sup>

We might well heed the irony of Paul Winter in reviewing N. Perrin's Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus,<sup>2</sup>

"If Perrin's interpretation of the Son of Man sayings in the synoptic Gospels is correct and it is supported by Vermes'

1 Jesus the Jew, p. 177.

2 Norman Perrin, Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus, London, New York, 1967.

...study ... of bar nash(a) ... then the place of the origin of the myth is not to be sought in Iran or in Judea or even in Ugarit, but in the German universities".<sup>1</sup>

Any attempt to find a background to Son of Man in the Similitudes of Enoch is frustrated by the question of its date.

In the Synoptics the Son of Man is used in contexts involving humiliation, rejection, suffering, death, resurrection, exaltation, authority and return in glory. In Matthew all these elements are present, but the emphasis is on the last three. Speaking of the reciprocal relationship which Matthew establishes between future and present, Kingsbury summarizes Jesus' status and virtually equates Son of Man with Son of God when he writes:

"Supremely Son of Man 'then', he is supremely Son of God 'now'".<sup>2</sup>

Kingsbury<sup>3</sup> also gives a valuable analysis of the precedence of Son of Man over kyrios. This is important because Lord was almost exclusively a title of God in the O.T.

"The Son of man takes precedence over kyrios for three reasons. First, the passages in which Matthew reveals that the figure he associated more closely with the parousia and the last Judgement is not Jesus kyrios per se, but Jesus, Son of man, predominate in the Gospel by a wide margin. Second Matthew twice attributes Kingdom to Jesus as kyrios. Last, at 12. 8 whereas Son of man is the subject of the sentence, kyrios is the predicate nominative and thus functions to make a statement about the Son of man."

N. Perrin has an important point in connection with the Son of Man's exaltation and with the view that Jesus regarded himself as a mere

1 Deutsche Literaturzeitung, 89, 1968, Fol. 784.

2 J.D. Kingsbury, Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom, London, 1967, p. 167.

3 Ibid., p. 107.

forerunner to the Son of Man. He says the latter cannot have been so,

"otherwise Mt. 11. 5 would be senseless, his reply to John the Baptist's question."<sup>1</sup>

Manson<sup>2</sup> is of the opinion that the Son of Man in 25. 31 stands for the body of the king and his brethren cf. Dan. 7. 13.

Black<sup>3</sup> observes that in 11. 19 the contrast is between John and Jesus (both individuals). However, to plead that the phrase has no communal meaning in one verse does not preclude that meaning in another context.

Manson's view cannot be accepted on the basis of terminology because there are grounds for holding that Mt. 28. 18-20 is an enthronement formula.<sup>4</sup> So, it seems likely that the Son of Man is to be identified with the King in 25. 31, 34, 40. As the latter is an individual, the former must be also. However, the King indicates his solidarity with 'the least' (v. 35ff.; v. 42ff.) so we may claim that, theologically, Manson is correct.

In 13. 37 the Son of Man is identified with the sower of the good seed, teacher of the word (no parallel in Mark or Q). This person is the same as the eschatological judge who sends his angels to separate wheat

1 Op. cit., p. 122. See also J. Jeremias, N. T. Theol., Vol. 1, p. 276.

2 Sayings, p. 249. The nearest Matthew approaches to communal kingship is 19. 28 (par. Lk. 22. 30) but the thrones are plural as distinct from 25. 31 and from Rev. 3. 21 etc.

3 AAGA, p. 329.

4 Bonnard, op. cit., ad loc; Joachim Jeremias, Jesus' Promise to the Nations, London, 1958, p. 38f.; see also Norman Perrin, Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus, p. 122; Thomas Fawcett, Hebrew Myth and Christian Gospel, London, 1973, pp. 230-236, esp. p. 233f.

from daniel at harvest. We may therefore infer that this figure propounds the criteria of judgement as an authoritative teacher. His coming as judge ratifies his supremacy as teacher. In 25. 31 the Son of man is judge and in 25. 34 King, a personality so dominating that His verdict, explanation and sentence are accepted without challenge. In vv 40. 45 the Son of Man/King is identified with the least in an act of supreme authority. The greater the person the greater the capacity to stoop to the level of the weakest without loss of power or dignity.

H. E. Tödt affirms that the Son of Man in Matthew is "a transcendent and sovereign figure."<sup>1</sup> We may accept this as a valid insight making allowances for the fact that it was written before Vermes' work appeared. Since Vermes we should have to rewrite the sentence to the effect that most of the occasions where the term is used in Matthew concern transcendence and sovereignty. Vermes himself observes,

"Matthew dwells heavily on the feature of the Parousia. He several times inserts the motif of the coming Son of Man into sayings which originally had no such connection, cf. Mk. 9. 1; Lk. 19. 27; 19. 28 and 22. 30 and interpolates eschatological parables among genuine ones, e.g. 13. 37, 41; 25. 31".<sup>2</sup>

It is not that on Matthew's organ the bass stops of suffering are never opened, but rather that those which strike victorious notes are dominant. This is true not only of his use of the Son of Man but of his portrait of Jesus in general. Nineham, for example, writes:

"for Matthew the crucifixion is temporary failure and humiliation"<sup>3</sup> and he contrasts this with John's doctrine,

"that Christ is glorified and exalted in his death".

1 The Son of Man in the Synoptic Tradition, London, Philadelphia, 1965, p. 220.

2 Op. cit., p. 185.

3 D. E. Nineham, "The Crucifixion", The Raven, No. 1, Mar. 1956, p.

A. Schweitzer has understood this as follows:

"as one who is to be the Son of Man at the resurrection of the dead, I must suffer."<sup>1</sup>

In the same way, he continues, we must understand the word about serving:

"as the one who in the appointed character of the Son of man is destined to the highest rule in the Messianic aeon I must now humble myself to the lowliest service."

In the light of Vermes' research, Schweitzer has put too much of a fixed content into the term Son of Man. He is quoted here to illustrate not a correct understanding of the Son of Man, but merely the proportion Matthew gives to the two principal aspects of Jesus' life in this connection, suffering and authority, the latter taken to include exaltation, parousia, etc.

A simple count of the number of Son of Man sayings within these two broad contexts reveals Matthew's emphasis: suffering and predictions of it, eight references; authority etc, twenty one references. Of the latter twenty one, ten may be said to be concerned with judgement and in the remainder this theme cannot be far from the author's mind.

In the following<sup>2</sup> list of Son of Man sayings which concern Jesus' authority, sovereignty, transcendence, etc., it will be noticed that it is not what Matthew omits from those sayings included by the other Synoptics that is of significance (though the term Son of Man is omitted from one of the three chief Marcan passion predictions, namely Mt. 16. 21; par. Mk. 8. 31) it is rather what Matthew adds that is of significance in revealing his main emphasis. Taking the group of sayings we have included under the general head of authority (aware that this is an over-simplification) and within that group those sayings

1 The Mystery of the Kingdom of God, The Secret of Jesus' Messiahship and Passion, London, 1925, p. 192f.

2 See Appendix D.



which are peculiar to Matthew we find that they all bear strong features of authority and exaltation<sup>1</sup>, Mt. 9. 6 is not among those peculiar to Matthew, but the curious phrase in 9. 8 concerning the power given to man is peculiar to Matthew. It is an addition to the pronouncement that the Son of Man has power to forgive sins, Son of Man therefore being one of the men. Thus, 9. 6, when taken with 9. 8 is a recalcitrant text which is incongruous with his main emphasis on the exaltation of the Son of Man. This is the more striking because Matthew has no saying on the Son of Man as sufferer which is not included in one at least of the other synoptics.

Matthew's deviations, in Son of Man sayings, from Q and from Mark are of profound significance. For example, in 10. 32f., on confession and denial of Jesus, Matthew omits the term Son of Man, replacing it by the first personal pronoun, whereas Q uses it (actually both 'Son of Man' and 'me') synonymously (Lk. 12. 8). This is probably because of Matthew's interest in depicting Jesus as judge and showing that the Kingdom belongs to him; cf. 13. 41 where it is his Kingdom as well as the Kingdom of their (the righteous') Father (13. 43). In Luke, Q, on the other hand, it is evident that: "the Son of

1 Jeremias (N. T. Theol., Vol. 1, p. 276) is so much aware of the exaltation motif in general that he claims Jesus is not yet Son of Man, but will be. This cannot be entirely true for it is inconsistent with Mt. 8. 20. Nor does it accord with Mt. 11. 19 where as Black (AAGA p. 329) writes: "... the context is not evidently apocalyptic". Jeremias' interpretation is not of much importance to my theme as I am concerned with the Son of Man in the end time, in any case. The distinction which Jeremias draws (loc. cit., p. 261) between hahu gabra and bar nasha is not important either, because of the indefinable quality I have found in the phrase 'Son of Man' when divorced from its context.

man is acting not as an independent Judge, but as an intercessor or guarantor before the assize".<sup>1</sup>

Another example is found in Matthew's alternative (16. 27f.) to Mark's account of Peter's confession (Mk. 8. 27f.). Matthew heads the whole section with the term Son of Man moving it forward from 16. 21 to 16. 13 (cf. Mk. 8. 27, 31) unlike Mark who applies the term to the prediction. The function of the Son of Man to judge every man including disciples is underlined because the context includes the section on the church (16. 17-20) and necessary crossbearing for disciples (16. 24-26). As if to stress further the sovereignty of the Son of Man, he is brought in at the end (16. 27) as judge of every man according to his works. The whole section (16. 13-28) is thus enveloped by Son of Man sayings. The connection between acknowledgement of his authority, his sufferings, the sufferings of his disciples and the judgeship of the Son of Man is thus made. Those who deny any reference to Dan. 7 miss the possible reference to the Son of Man as communal sufferer, viz. that the saints would be worn out (Dan. 7. 25). In Matthew 25. 31-46 the Son of Man/King is identified with sufferers.

The section on the church is absent from Mark. Instead of Matthew's saying about judgement, Mark has a saying about those who are ashamed of Jesus and His words at the coming of the Son of Man. This makes the Son of Man into a kind of advocate for the prosecution rather than the independent judge of Matthew's picture (Mk. 8. 38, cf. Mt. 16. 27). (This is not to deny what F. H. Borsch avers:

"the judge in any Semitic situation was always judge, defence counsellor and prosecuting attorney rolled into one".)<sup>2</sup>

In 16. 27 Jesus is undeniably judge, though "in the glory of his Father".

1. Tödt, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

2. The Son of Man in Myth and History, London, 1967, p. 363.

In 25. 31-46 J. Jeremias<sup>1</sup> has questioned his judgeship on the grounds of the phrase in v. 34 *ἐυλογημένοι τοῦ πατρὸς μου* . I believe he goes too far when he claims that Jesus merely announces a sentence already decided by the Father. It is Jesus who gives the explanation of the sentence "I was hungry ... " and this is not usually dissociated from the verdict and sentence. We might appeal to 11. 27:

"all things are delivered unto me by my Father ... "

a bolt from the Johannine blue, or the post-Resurrection enthronement formula, 28. 18:

"all power is given (the passive of God's activity) unto me in heaven and in earth",

for confirmation of the claim that the Son of Man is an independent judge because the Father has made him so.

A comparison between Mt. 24. 27-31 and Mk. 13. 26f. also reveals additions by Matthew; the metaphor of lightning signifying the conspicuousness and unmistakeable nature of his second coming; the logion about the carcass made foul and putrid by corruption and the vultures gathering, a parable of inevitable judgement on the rottenness of sin; the apocalyptic trumpet adding regal dignity and awe; the mourning of all tribes of the earth.

The last point calls for development. It is surely significant that the very part of Zechariah (12. 10) which would have indicated Jesus' death most plainly (him whom they have pierced) is omitted by Matthew, though included in Revelation (1. 7) in the comparable announcement: "Behold he comes with clouds and every eye will see him, everyone who pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth will wail because of him".

1 P.J., p. 208, cf. Manson, Sayings, p. 250.

Here we have, in both cases, the features of clouds, the universal sight of him, the mourning because of him. The only part omitted by Matthew is the one concerning piercing. The conclusion is inescapable, in the words of Tödt:

"Matthew does not wish to express the unity of the Son of man with the crucified; he rather wished to emphasise the judgement which will be initiated by the coming of the Son of man. By adopting from Zechariah the allusion to those who pierced Him, he would have limited the threat of judgement to enemies and exempted the community from judgement. This exemption would have conflicted with his concept of judgement."<sup>1</sup>

There are three vital factors in the Son of Man figure in Matthew:

- (1) He had once himself suffered in history. His royal pedigree going back to Abraham,<sup>2</sup> father of the faithful, indicates that Matthew wants to emphasise the dignity of his person, yet notes that this was studiously ignored by the Jewish authorities. In infancy as in his ministry, the Son of Man had nowhere to lay his head. Only Matthew records the exile in Egypt (2. 13). His sufferings were illustrated also in his lordship of the Sabbath and his power on earth to forgive sins, because they were both contested by the same authorities. His Resurrection has already been noted as the earnest of his future glory, predicted by himself at the end of his historical affliction. There one might have supposed his sufferings would end, but rulers and people disbelieved (27. 63; 28. 13), even disciples doubted (28. 17b). This must have been a source of grief to him for he is still the same person, his disciples are his brethren (28. 10) and would be till the second coming (25. 40, 45). As he was the same person he must have had the same feelings as before, the same pain at rejection (23. 37). They would not allow Jesus to gather them; they would not meet his moral demands and so missed the

1 Op. cit., p. 81.

2 See p. 336, below.

revelation of his Resurrection<sup>1</sup>.

(2) Jesus was present after His exaltation in the least of his brethren (25. 40, 45). It is difficult to see how he could have so fully identified with them, had he not first suffered himself. The very word brethren carries this implication. The O.T. often refers to the emotion of compassion between brothers: Joseph weeping over his; Moses, though a prince of Egypt, enraged by the flogging of one of his fellow Hebrews.

Dalman, though badly mistaken on the general subject of the Son of Man, expressed well the meaning the phrase can carry in the context of identification. He wrote:

"The Son of man was ... what any Hellenist must have taken it to be, an intentional veiling of the Messianic character under a title which affirms the humanity of Him who bore it."<sup>2</sup>

Had he written, "the son of Man could be", instead of "the Son of Man was", he could have been heartily endorsed.

(3) Jesus' future revelation as Son of Man is the most vital for Matthew, as already stated. He can establish the idea that he is identified with the least - an act of supreme power. He is coming to confirm the unique authority of his teaching. No mere abstraction is he but a living, preeminent person, who indeed gives content to the very word person. His appearance is the climax of history. Without an end, history would have no goal and no meaning. With this end, men are delivered from moral inconclusiveness and history from aimlessness.

1 Implicit in Matthew is the view of James Denney, Jesus and the Gospel, London, 1908, p. 140f. that the experience of the Risen Christ was morally conditioned. To put this in Matthaean terms, the pure in heart saw God in Christ (5. 8; 11. 27); the impure missed him.

2 G. Dalman, The Words of Jesus, Edinburgh, 1902, p. 255.

There are many little touches unique to Matthew which underpin this authoritarian aspect, e.g. he forbids disciples, on pain of the most appalling threat, to call a brother  $\rho\omega\rho\epsilon$ , yet he himself calls the Pharisees  $\rho\omega\rho\omicron\iota$ . The angels are his angels. The Son of Man in the End becomes the central figure, Judge, Lord and King.

The standards of the world had been reversed in history. The Son of Man had been rejected and spurned by the authorities. They were reversed again when he identified with the least.

So far, he is, in some respects, hidden. On his return, the measurements of the world by success, prestige and status are not only turned upside down, but manifestly seen to be so. The Son of Man is unmistakeably sovereign. The sower-teacher has become the Judge, the temporarily humbled Son of Man has become the absolute Ruler, to offend whom is a sin of eternal consequence. In the context of Son of Man sayings the criteria of judgement appear as sin in general (darnel), betrayal and the doing or not doing of deeds of kindness to him as he is identified with the least of his brethren.

The finding of this brief study may have served to sharpen the criteria of judgement in those sayings where the term is used.

The reason for stating this is that Jesus staked no premature claim to be the Son of God or Messiah when he called himself the Son of Man. In itself the Son of Man is a neutral term. A connection may be found in 17.9 between the Son of Man and the messianic secret. Premature claims to be the Son of God or the Messiah would have diminished the guiltiness of disbelief because it would have given disbelievers a better excuse for arguing that Jesus was a threat to their strict monotheism, a blasphemer of the First Commandment.

Those who rejected the Son of Man or neglected his agents,

rejected someone of great authority and undeniable power, but also someone gentle and lowly (11.29), who scorned to coerce men's minds into belief (4. 1-11).

The way in which Jesus used the phrase Son of Man invited men to decide for themselves what content ought to be given to it. Some elements of what the Son of Man claimed for himself were empirically verifiable and some of them designedly so, e.g. his healing power, the physical display of which was given as proof of spiritual healing (9. 6ff.); his burial<sup>1</sup> (12. 40); his sufferings, betrayal, death, and, for some, his Resurrection (16. 21; 17. 9; 20. 19; fulfilled, 27. passim; 28. 7-17).

A wilful failure to attribute the proper qualities, demanded by the several contexts, to him who described himself as the Son of Man, is the criterion of judgement which arises. The identification of this preeminently exalted figure with the "least" is perhaps, for my theme, the most valuable outcome of a study of the term, 'Son of Man'.

1 Unlike the Romans, the Jews did not bury criminals in the ground as Jesus was buried, indeed much more richly and honourably than normal, in solid rock, (27. 60). The corpses of the wicked were still, so far as we know, crudely covered with a heap of stones (see Josh. 7. 26; 8. 29; 2 Sam. 18. 17).

## THE MEANING OF "ALL NATIONS"

As Ingelaere<sup>1</sup> points out, the difficulty in defining all nations is due to the fact that ἔθνη, like the Hebrew haggoyim, had taken on a technical sense to designate pagans in opposition to the chosen people. This is the normal LXX usage. So it is with ἔθνη (Mt. 5. 47; 6. 7; 18. 17) which denotes those outside the sacred community. The question arises whether, for Matthew in the beginning of the Christian era, Jews were included in all nations or not.

Schmidt observes:

"there are sixty-four passages in the N.T. where we have ἔθνος or ἔθνη without any special sense".

Thirteen of these he finds "have in view the Jewish people"<sup>2</sup>, but Schmidt has a feeling that, in spite of the addition, πάντα, (in Mt. 25. 32 etc.) the references exclude Jews (see additional note).

The word ἔθνος is applied to the Jews or to Israel several times in the N.T.: Lk. 7. 5; 23. 2; Jn. 11. 48, 50, 51, 52; 26. 4; 28. 19; Gal. 1. 14, so it is at least possible that Matthew could have included Jews among πάντα τὰ ἔθνη. In 1 Pet. 2. 9 ἔθνος probably includes Jewish Christians<sup>3</sup> but also a number of Gentile Christians, so it has a certain flexibility.

In Mt. 6. 32 ἔθνη must mean pagans in opposition to disciples. The same applies to 20. 25, because it makes civil and church government a foil for each other. These two instances seem to indicate that Jews

1 Op. cit., p. 35.

2 Karl Ludwig Schmidt, "ἔθνος in the N.T.", TDNT, p. 369.

3 Cf. Deut. 7. 7 LXX, where Israel may be assumed to be among the nations.



could be included among τὰ ἔθνη.

Matthew definitely always uses ἔθνη in the technical sense already defined. He never uses it to mean Christians of pagan origin<sup>1</sup>.

Altogether the question whether or not Jews should be included in πάντα τὰ ἔθνη cannot be settled by a study of the word ἔθνη. Can it be settled by a study of πάντα τὰ ἔθνη in Matthew?

The latter expression occurs four times in Matthew: (1) 24. 9; (2) 24. 14; (3) 25. 32; (4) 28. 19<sup>2</sup>. (1) means those who persecute disciples and this must include Jews (22. 1-10); (2) means the objects of mission which could and should include Jews, and (4) manifestly

- 1 In this respect he contrasts with Paul who calls Gentile Christians ἔθνη in Rom. 11. "The distinction from Judaism is also decisive in the use of ἔθνικός (Gal. 2. 14)", (so Kittel, Schmidt, "ἔθνικός", loc. cit., p. 372) but one is entitled to ask "what other word could have been used?" Anyhow, there is no reason to deny ἔθνη (ἔθνικός) some flexibility, as other words such as κέρας, for example, have a much greater flexibility.

This could not be applied by Matthew to Christians for they are exactly the people who do know God (11. 27) and disciples those who understand the word of the Kingdom (more properly Rule, or Kingship) (13. 23).

In stark contrast to Paul, the fourth Gospel does not use ἔθνη for Gentiles at all. This is significant of the whole problem and makes one cautious about making any dogmatic pronouncements.

- 2 A general point made by W.D. Davies in The Sermon on the Mount (p. 86) may have some weight in this matter. In discussing the evidence that "the shadow of Jamnia lies over Matthew's Gospel", he observes that "Matthew deliberately sets his Gospel over against Judaism". After citing 27. 62ff. and 28. 15 he writes: "Christians are very markedly set over against the Jewish community. Thus, for example, in the Beatitudes we are probably to emphasize the pronoun (αὐτοῖς) which has an antithetical effect. 'Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven' etc. It is these people rather than those, that is the Pharisees and Jews, who are blessed. In v. 10, the two groups emerge clearly as Christian and Jews".

signifies everybody without limit. Jews were not disciples so they must have been included among those to be made disciples (μαθητεύω, v. 19). Jews did not know or observe all things whatever (πάντα ὅσα) Jesus had commanded; therefore they would need to be taught (διδάσκω v. 10). It was not the O.T. Torah that the people were to be taught but whatever Jesus commanded.<sup>1</sup> It would be odd indeed if Jews were to be excluded.

It seems likely therefore that Matthew used πάντα τὰ ἔθνη in a way which included Jews in 25. 32. In view of 3. 9 it is impossible that on the mere grounds of physical descent they could have been excused from the Great Assize. In view of the antitheses of the Sermon on the Mount and the whole standard of ethical conduct demanded by Jesus and the need for His example, his life, as the basis for these demands, it is impossible that Matthew could envisage a post-Christian Jew inheriting the Kingdom by virtue of obedience to the Torah.<sup>2</sup> It is not conceivable that he saw all Jews excluded from the Kingdom (11. 28).

This discussion might not drastically affect the definition of the criterion of judgement in 25. 31-46. If, however, Jews were to be excluded from πάντα τὰ ἔθνη it would diminish the value of this criterion very much. It might also mean that there was some sort of side door by which Jews might enter the Kingdom without responding to

1 Lk. 24. 47 provides an instance where preaching to (εἰς) πάντα τὰ ἔθνη almost certainly includes the Jews because the command is "starting from Jerusalem".

2 Unless the law reinterpreted by Jesus is meant, but then the man would no longer be a Jew.

the Gospel. If we take this along with what Schmidt<sup>1</sup> says about the disparaging sense which ἔθνη often has in the Greek world, we may conclude that Matthew reluctantly, or as part of his anti-Jewish polemic, took the rather pejorative Greek word and applied it against the Jews, because they had rejected the Messiah.

1 Op. cit., p. 369, (3)

Additional Note on ἔθνος in Kittel (loc. cit., p. 369f.)

The first text Schmidt uses to support the feeling that Jews are not included in πάντα τὰ ἔθνη is firmly in his favour, though for a reason other than that which he gives. This text is Rom. 15. 11 which:

"summons all nations to praise God, but this can hardly include Israel, since it is self-evident that Israel should praise God".

Ideally, it may have been self-evident, but it is unrealistic to imply that Israel needed no reminding. Israel was given many commands to praise God (see Psalms, Ps. 9. 11; 47. 6 etc.) and was often rebellious against God's commands. It is the context, the explicit distinction drawn between the circumcised (v. 8) and the Gentiles, which makes it certain that in this instance Jews are not included in all nations. However, in the original O.T. passage (Ps. 117. 1) the phrase definitely did include Jews as C. K. Barrett (A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, London, 1962, ad loc) recognizes. Therefore it is perfectly possible that Matthew used the phrase in accordance with O.T. usage. It would not be at all proper to affirm that because Paul adapted it to his particular end, Matthew must have made the same adaptation in a quite different context.

The second example in Kittel is Gen. 13. 8 which speaks of the blessing of all nations in Abraham. Schmidt writes:

"But this surely has in view the nations apart from Israel since the blessing of Israel ... may be assumed".

But this is one thing we may not assume of the Jews in the N.T. In Mt. 3. 9 God's omnipotence is not dependent on physical descendants of Abraham. Gal. 3. 29 states that those who are Christ's are Abraham's descendants. In Romans, especially Chapter 11, it is clear that the Jews, as a race, have been cut off.

However, Kittel has three examples from Matthew which could weigh heavily towards establishing the sense of ἔθνη as Gentiles, distinct from Jews:

"In Mt. 6. 32, Jesus directs His hearers not to pray as the ἔθνη an ethico-religious contrast between Jews and Gentiles which is based on the special position of Israel in salvation history".

The parallel in Lk. 12. 30 deliberately emphasizes the distinction by the phrase πάντα τὰ ἔθνη τοῦ κόσμου (the κόσμος to which no true Jew belongs as a member of the people of God). But could we not replace the word Jews by disciples of Jesus and Gentiles by non-believers in Jesus?

In Mt. 10. 5 these ἔθνη are set alongside the despised Samaritans. In Mt. 20. 19 in the foretelling of the passion, the Messiah Jesus is to be delivered up to the ἔθνη - the very last people to whom the Messiah of the people of God should be handed over. These are distinguished from the people of God (λαός) who reject Jesus (21. 23; 27. 25, 64). If one could be sure that Matthew was using ἔθνη only in a Judaistic sense these examples would be very cogent but one wonders whether, at the back of his mind, the concept of the New Israel (cf. 21. 41, 43 though he does not use the phrase) was not working, even in these instances.

## THE LEAST OF THE KING'S BRETHREN

These may be taken as first, the poor and downtrodden in general, with universal judgement. Secondly, a minority<sup>1</sup> take the view that the brethren are Jesus' least disciples, the judgement that of those who are confronted by them in their need, suffering as the humblest agents of the King. This interpretation involves the assumption that those judged have been evangelized (cf. Mt. 24. 14).<sup>2</sup>

The judgement cannot be directed towards disciples only, though false disciples may be included (cf. 7. 15ff.) because the text specifically states "all nations" will be gathered and separated. Owing to what we have observed on the meaning of all nations, it is possible that Christians might be excluded.

- 1 E.g. Green, op. cit., ad loc; J. Ramsey Michaels, "Apostolic Hardships and Righteous Gentiles". Journal of Biblical Literature, 84, 1965, pp. 27 - 37;

S. Légasse Jésus et l'enfant: Études Bibliques, Paris, 1969, pp. 93ff.;

Lamar Cope "The Sheep and the Goats reinterpreted", Novum Testamentum, Vol. XI, 1969, pp. 32-44;

M.D. Goulder, Midrash and Lection in Matthew, London, 1974, pp. 443, 444;

J. Lambrecht, "The Parousia Discourse", M. Didier, L'Évangile selon Matthieu: Rédaction et Théologie, Gembloux, 1972, p. 341.

- 2 E.g. Légasse, loc. cit., p. 94. Légasse (ibid) also writes:

"S'il en est ainsi ce ne sont pas des païens que le souverain juge convoque devant lui ... "

They are pagans no longer as they have heard the message and reacted to the messengers. One sees what he means but he appears to assume that all who have heard the Gospel have in some sense responded to it and are therefore no longer pagans in the strict sense. (In this he seems to be alone among commentators). His case may be strengthened in that both sheep and goats refer to Jesus as "Lord". However this is a moot point in that Jesus' Lordship would be inescapable and universally acknowledged, cf. 24. 27. His coming is as the lightning, shining from East to West (cf. Phil. 2.10, 11).

The minority hold, in substance, that the ἐλάχιστοι are the superlatively weak disciples in the most precarious position. They are disciples because the μικροί are disciples (18. 6, 10). The phraseology in which the two words occur is remarkably similar, ἐνός and οὗτος both appearing in 10. 42; 18. 6, 10, 14. The snags are: that "least" in this sense and in this phraseology is peculiar to 25. 40, 45; that there is no explicit indication that "the least" are believers (cf. 18. 6); or that they are sent by Jesus as in 10. 5; or that their sufferings are anything that could not happen to anyone at all, i.e. they are not necessarily the result of missionary work.

So Michaels' parallels between 10. 40-42 and 25. 31-46, e.g. little ones, least; he that receives you, givers of hospitality, do not bear the weight he places upon them, though 10. 14 and 25. 46 have a parallel in the concept of fire and judgement.

Cope<sup>1</sup> traces the reward of a prophet (10. 40) to 1 Kings 17. 8-27. The idea of unconscious hospitality present in Mt. 25. 31-46 is probably also present in the story of the widow of Zarephath for it is only at the end of v. 24 that she affirms Elijah to be a man of God (cf. the Shunammite, 2 Kings 4. 8-37, who realizes from the start, v. 9, that Elisha was a man of God). The resurrection of both widows' sons may be an adumbration of the eternal life in Mt. 25. 34, 46b.

Michaels draws a parallel between the harrowed and pitiable of Mt. 25. 31-46 and Paul's list of afflictions in 2 Cor. 11. 23-29. He finds a parallel to all of the words describing suffering in Matthew except for ἐνός. Justifiably, he claims that: "Even this term corresponds in a

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit., p. 40.

general way to the *οδοιπορία* and the various kinds of *κίνδυνοι* in 2 Cor. 11. 26 ...". He further affirms that: "The only terms that have no direct bearing are *πόθος* and *ἀγρυπνία* which stress hard labour and vigilance. The reason for their absence can only be conjectured".

In answer to this we may well conjecture that the reason for their absence is that Matthew does not have Apostles in mind. *κόπος* is also absent from Mt. 25 and *νηστεία* may well involve a voluntary element absent from hunger and thirst. Indeed in 2 Cor. 11. 29 fasting is added to hunger and thirst as if it were something over and above them. Noteworthy phrases most specifically indicating Apostolic burdens: anxiety for all the churches, sympathy for the weak and indignation over the downtrodden (2 Cor. 11. 28, 29) are not mentioned by Michaels. Two other lists containing Apostolic hardships (2 Cor. 6. 5; 12. 10) are less comparable with Mt. 25. 35, 36, 42, 43 than 2-Cor. 11. 28, 29.

A more likely connection with the least in Mt. 25 would be with the strayed sheep of 18. 12 which is probably associated with the little ones of 18. 10, 14.

Now we pass to the word "brother". In the O.T. and in the Jewish tradition, it is distinguished from neighbour in that the latter tends to be a purely national term including the stranger who lives in the land, whereas brother (somewhat paradoxically) tends to mean a fellow-member of a religious community, usually the Israelite community. Except in obvious instances where it means blood-brother, it is more concerned with spiritual affiliation rather than physical relationship.

T.W. Manson<sup>1</sup> and J.C. Ingelaere<sup>2</sup> bear witness to this. Manson writes that in neighbour the idea uppermost is that of being members of the same nation by physical descent whereas in brother the idea uppermost is that of sharing a common faith and loyalty. Ingelaere observes that brother designated a member of the Israelite religious community whilst neighbour was a member of the sect. Ingelaere concludes that Matthew took up this precise sense of brother amounting to a technical term. Almost without exception (other than when it plainly means blood-brother) Matthew uses brother in the sense of one of the community of Jesus' disciples. See Appendix F.

Some scholars whose opinions are normally weighty are arrayed on the side which holds that the brethren must be universalized:

"These my brethren," writes David Hill, "might give the impression that the reference was to the disciples alone. In fact, the word *τοιούτων* probably represents a superfluous Semitic demonstrative. The use of one, *εἷς*, with the meaning "anyone", unspecific, may also indicate Semitic usage".<sup>3</sup>

Against this we may observe that "one" may simply accentuate the modesty of the ethical demand. The righteous were not expected to help multitudes of people, just one. "These" may have been inserted for clarity. It makes the objects of charity quite unmistakeable.

Another scholar who adopts a similar stance is H.E.W. Turner who writes:

"There is no indication in this passage that Christians alone are in mind. The self-identification of the Son of man-King extends beyond the confines of the Church (contrary to Calvin). He identifies himself not merely with mankind as a whole but with

1 Ethics and the Gospel, London, 1960, p. 17.

2 Op. cit., p. 52.

3 Op. cit., ad loc. He refers to J. Jeremias, PJ, pp. 206ff.



each man".<sup>1</sup>

This may be so but Turner fails to tackle the question of the oddity of the use of "brethren" in the universal sense he attributes to it.

Jeremias<sup>2</sup> is aware of the problem and, in effect, argues that from the omission of brethren in v. 45 we may assume that brethren is being taken in a looser sense than is normal in the N.T. But the word may simply have been omitted in v. 45 because understood from v. 40.

Jeremias also objects to the assumption of "a world-wide mission to the remotest nations"<sup>3</sup> but does so on the grounds that it "does not correspond with the outlook of Jesus". It does however correspond with the universalist strand in Matthew (8. 12; 24. 14; 28. 18-20 etc) and this is all that concerns me.

For more material on defining "the least of these my brethren", see Appendices E and F.

1 ET, Vol. 71, 1965-66, p. 245. Incidentally Turner's interpretation of *τῶν* as each lends weight to my understanding that the charitable acts expected here are minimal, i.e. even to one.

2 PJD, p. 207. But see also PJ on the : "Christianizing of the word *ἑταῖρος* " (p. 109 n. 82), where he argues that originally the word was used in: "the broader sense of 'neighbour'".

3 Ibid., and loc. cit., p. 64f.

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## THE ATTITUDE OF THE CURSED

In establishing the criterion of judgement here it is not vital to decide whether the least of the King's brethren are his disciples and his emissaries or any poor wretches whatever. However, it is valuable to do so in that if they are, then those who failed in according kindness to them are more directly to blame for impeding the progress of the Kingdom of heaven.

On either interpretation of the least, what is essential is that the sheep and goats were unconscious (cf. 6. 3) of their respective righteousness or unrighteousness. Both groups expressed surprise: the first, at whom they had helped; the second, at whom they had failed to help. "When did we see you (σὺ) ...?" vv. 38, 44 is a question they both ask. They were unaware of the identity of "the least". (The singular here weakens the case for a communal Son of Man).

A problem arises in that once a man has been made a disciple (28. 18) and been taught (28. 19) the commandments of Jesus, including that implicit in 25. 31-46, it is difficult to see how he can maintain his unconscious goodness. But this problem is probably more philosophical than psychological or spiritual. In the existential situation a man may know of this passage yet be unaware of his goodness in particular acts.

Trilling is correct, with one exception, when he writes:

"The works enumerated by the judge<sup>1</sup> are the standard works of mercy. The doctors of the Jewish law esteemed them highly ..."<sup>2</sup>, cf. Is. 58. 8 (see Appendix F, p. 302).

- 1 Jeremias, PJ, p. 211, disagrees that the Son of Man is the judge in 25. 31-46. It is true that the sentence comes first and that the blessed are blessed "by my Father", but I do not feel that Jeremias has established his point. Judgement by Jesus seems implicit.
- 2 Wolfgang Trilling, The Gospel According to St Matthew (2 vols.), London, 1965, Vol. 2, ad loc. On the attitude to strangers we may contrast: "... alien is alien, foreigner is indeed foreigner." (W.G. Lambert, Babylonian Wisdom Literature, Oxford, 1960, p. 271, ll. 16-18).

The exception, mentioned by Jeremias, is: "... the visitation of prisoners which does not occur in Jewish lists of good works".<sup>1</sup>

Jeremias<sup>2</sup> also draws attention to the contrasting self-conscious goodness of the righteous in The Egyptian Book of the Dead and in the Acts of Thomas, 45. But what does emerge positively is the possible world-wide acknowledgement of the goodness of these deeds, bar one. Matthew alone underscores the appropriate attitude to doing them.

Altogether, as in 25. 1-13 and 25. 14-30 the preeminent criterion of judgement is attitude, here too the attitude is primary.<sup>3</sup> It is one of negligence towards the needy, perhaps even superciliousness - "If only we had known who it was that was in need but as it was we saw only insignificant wretches ... " The question as to whether the afflicted are disciples or not is of minor importance, especially in the light of the unawareness<sup>4</sup> of both righteous and cursed as to the identity of "the least". Lack of compassion is the criterion of judgement in this climactic passage.

1 PJ, p. 207. Jeremias is one of the many scholars who believe that: "'the brethren' ... are all the afflicted and needy" (ibid), but this exception accords better with the view that the brethren are disciples. It is more likely that Matthew would exhort men to visit those imprisoned "for righteousness' sake" than to visit anyone in prison.

2 PJ, p. 208.

3 This receives possible confirmation from the suggestion by Georges Gander, L'Evangile de l'Eglise (6 vols.), Geneva, 1971, Vol. VI, p. 475 n. 19, who suggests that ἀποκριθῆσονται if rendered into Aramaic would indicate: "l'aspect de l'action ou de l'état".

4 Cf. Heb. 13. 2.

Additional Note on Right and Left in Mt. 25. 32

For references to this matter, see The Encyclopaedia Judaica, Vol. 14, article, "Right and Left", pp. 177-180. Though some of those cited there are not pertinent to Mt. 25. 32, several are. A strikingly appropriate example absent from the Encyclopaedia Judaica may be found in the Mekilta (quoted on p. 278 below). In Sanh. 107b (S. n. p. 136) human nature is one of the things which "the left hand should repulse". If it is natural to be selfish and oblivious to the needs of others, except to those who reciprocate kindness or are tied by blood, as Matthew seems at times to imply (Mt. 6. 46, 47; 7. 11), then the above Sanhedrin dictum is singularly apposite. Shab. 63a gives two interpretations of O.T. usage by Rashi, the second of which is in a sense germane: "'... to the right hand'...'refers to those who study the Torah for its own sake, '... to the left hand ...'implies the opposite". The sense in which this is relevant is not in the study perse but in the phrase 'for its own sake', i.e. reading "deeds of kindness for their own sake" and connecting hearing with study and with doing, the first and last of which being inseparably joined by Matthew in the context of judgement (7. 24-27).

## CONCLUSION

In severity of punishment, there is little to choose between the various passages which refer to the criteria of judgement<sup>1</sup>. If we are to make an assessment of their relative importance in the mind of Matthew we must do so on the basis of emphasis. This is disclosed (apart from the force of the language used which is usually connected with punishment) by the frequency with which and the length at which Matthew writes on each topic<sup>2</sup>. Weighed in this scale, rejection of Jesus and his disciples is the paramount criterion. If the interpretation of the least of the King's brethren which I favoured is correct, then emissaries should be included with disciples. The sentence meted out for neglect in 25.41, 46 is as unsparing as that for rejection in 10.15; 11.22, 24; 23.35, so neglect may be taken as equivalent to rejection. Owing to the stress on lack of compassion in chapters 10, 12, 23 and 25.31-46 this should also be considered as part of rejection. That is why I believe the quotation from Tennyson below to be appropriate.

Rejection of Jesus primarily and almost exclusively by Jews is a dominant theme in the entire Gospel. The tone is set in chapter 2 where Magi seek, worship and offer gifts whereas the chief priests and scribes, though ready enough to find the prophecy, take no positive action except insofar as they are agitated (*ταρσύνω*) along with Herod and the whole of Jerusalem. Herod himself, the villain of the piece, though only partly Jewish is in effect a representative of Jewry. The theme is prominent throughout and often appears in contexts (besides those dealt with and those not necessarily relevant as 21.33-46) not

1 Even the fate of the betrayers (26.24) is not appreciably worse than that of those who offend disciples (18.6).

2 Positioning is also significant but this has been remarked upon already where appropriate.

directly concerned with final judgement, e.g. 15.8 where "this people" clearly means Jews. The climax comes in 27.25, peculiar to Matthew.

As an anti-Jewish polemic pervades much of the Gospel we may see the outward show of the foolish bridesmaids as an attack on the hypocrisy of Jewish leaders (cf. 23 passim and perhaps 7.21-23). The one talent in 25.14-30 could be the Torah and this has been hinted at by describing the holder of it as legalistic<sup>1</sup> and giving God his bare due (see p. 233, above). But the anti-Jewish polemic is not so all-pervasive that we may certainly find in it a key to unlock every door of interpretation in Matthew. That is why I did not give prominence, in pp. 215 ff., to the understanding just mentioned of 25.1-13 and 25.14-30.

Another piece of evidence that Matthew has a rather dominating aim to disclose rejection of Jesus by Jews, especially Jewish leaders, is the context in which he places the unforgivable sin (12.31f.). This context is one of Pharisaic hostility (12.2, 24) in contrast to Luke who sets the sin, with less emphasis, in another context 12.10 where Jesus is addressing disciples. In Luke the Beelzebul controversy (11.14-23) is between the people in general and Jesus (vv. 14, 15). The people may well have included Gentiles.

Matthew obviously does not place the entire Jewish people in the category of those who reject Jesus. Ten of them at any rate ought to have become genuine followers. From the twelve originally called (4.18-22; 10.2-4) we must subtract Judas (27.3-5) and maybe Philip who was "possibly of Greek descent"<sup>2</sup>. After the stilling of the second recorded storm on the Sea of Galilee, those in the boat make the supreme affirmation of faith (14.32, cf. Peter's confession in

1 For the excessive caution of this man and the implication that God was hard and exacting, see the article "Law" in DCG, Vol. 2, pp. 11ff. and Schurer, op.cit., Div. 2, Vol. 2, pp. 90-125, esp. pp. 92, 96, 125.

2 DCG, Vol. 2, p. 359.

16.16). Though they all forsook Jesus at his arrest (26.56), the eleven take up the invitation (28.7b, 16f) to go to Galilee to meet Jesus after he had risen from the dead. However, not all believed, "some doubted", so it may be that even out of this small group Matthew feels not all would prove to be genuine disciples.

Indeed with the exception of chapter 10 Gentiles are praised for their faith and disciples rebuked for their little faith (see TIM pp. 291ff.)

Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum probably contained some Gentiles<sup>1</sup> so in 11.21, 23 the latter may have been amongst those who failed to repent on experiencing Jesus' mighty works. So we cannot be sure that Matthew denounces Jews only for rejecting Jesus. Via generalizes the opposition too much in saying: "The perversity of the men of Jesus' generation"<sup>2</sup> whereas he ought to have written " . . . the men, predominantly the Jewish leaders". Although all the people in the crowd during the Trial before Pilate took the responsibility for the blood of Jesus (27.25) Matthew evidently believes that they had been so persuaded by the chief priests and elders (27.20). This point is reinforced by the frequent observations by Matthew of the favourable attitude of crowds to Jesus, besides the obvious fact that they thronged him for his healing powers e.g. 12.15b; 14.13, 14. These observations are: 7.28f.; 9.8, 33; 12.23; (14.5, John the Baptist); 15.31; 16.14; 21.9, 11, 46<sup>3</sup>; 22.33. The case for the men in general, ordinary people, being prone to accept Jesus at least as a prophet

1 There may not have been many. David Smith in DCG, Vol. 1, p. 633 points out that Aristobulus (BC 104-103) conquered much of Galilee and compelled the inhabitants to be circumcised . . ."

2 Op.cit., p. 118.

3 In this chapter the crowd may have been largely Galilean, but I do not believe entirely so because of the attitude of some of them in 13.54 ff. and 11.20-23. But one has to allow for the fickleness of a crowd.

is buttressed by the curious insertion by Matthew of the word "men" in 8.26, 27. In the parallels, Mk. 4.40f.; Lk. 8.25 it is clearly disciples who are addressed. Another significant text is 3.7 (for John the Baptist was the forerunner of Jesus, 3.3). In 3.7 it is the Pharisees and Sadducees who are described as a "brood of vipers"; in Lk. 3.7, the multitudes. Besides, in Lk. 22.47, a crowd came to arrest Jesus (v. 54), but Mt. 26.47 notes that this crowd was "from the chief priests and elders" to which Mark adds "scribes" (14.43).

Truth about human nature often portrays inconsistencies and it is not surprising that there are occasions when the people or whole cities are described or prophesied as hostile to Jesus or his disciples: 5.11; 8.34 (Gadarenes); 9.24b; 10.14, 16ff. (and here Gentiles do figure); 11.20-23; 13.54 ff.; 20.31; 23.37; 27.25 (already mentioned, with reservations).

Despite these exceptions, it may be claimed that, on the whole, the common people are inclined to accept Jesus, though not to acknowledge him as Christ. They are, however, easily led, like sheep (9.36; 27.20).

It is implicit in Matthew that Jewish leaders ought to have recognized Jesus as the Christ and accepted him. We may gather that they knew the O.T. prophecies which he fulfilled and expounded from 2.4-7; 21.16 (chief priests and scribes); 15.4 (Pharisees and scribes); 21.42 (chief priests and elders); 22.43ff. (Pharisees); 23.2a (scribes and Pharisees). These are the more direct indications, but there are many besides which indirectly point to the same thing (see Appendix I). Thus, the Jewish authorities are specially to blame and their wilful blindness becomes part of the criterion of judgement, rejecting Jesus. Via puts this matter (barring the objection just raised):



"It would not be fair to blame them (the perverse men of Jesus' generation) if what they lacked was intellectual knowledge or information. But their unperception or blindness is reprehensible and blameworthy because it is a lack of that awareness which is given with existence itself when the latter is turned in the right direction. That is, they are considered capable of responding to Jesus' person and word. <sup>7</sup>He might have added "mighty works" and "Holy Spirit". Their blindness is grounded in a self-deception which has come to believe its own lies and therefore cannot recognise what is true and right. What is really darkness is taken to be light (Matt. 6.22-23 ...)."

The phrase ". . . turned in the right direction" is most important because it reveals a connexion between the rejection of Jesus and failure to repent and obey his teaching.

This brings us to the consideration of the criterion which ranks next highest in Matthew's mind. Refusal to repent is heavily underlined in 11.20f.; 12.41, 42. 21.32 is a strong admonition and though probably not connected with final judgement<sup>1</sup> it helps to highlight the need to repent. Lack of repentance should be associated with the making of correct verbal protestations without obedience to Jesus (9.21-23; 25.11, 44). In 3.8 the bearing of fruit that befits repentance is explicitly commanded.

Not far below is evil speech (5.22; 7.4, 12.32, 34.36, 37 and the opprobrium in which Matthew holds it is underscored by the fact that it is part of the unforgivable sin (12.32b).

The various criteria singled out justify the choice of the plural in the title of this thesis, criteria. It is clear that the adoption of a kind attitude, to Jesus, to his disciples or to men in general, would not be a criterion adequate or sufficiently explicit and specific to cover Matthew's teaching on anger, evil speaking, divorce or judging. There are circumstances in which the way of kindness

1 This is so because the word *ἔρχεται*, lead forth or forwards, precede, implies that others would follow.

might be understood to condone these things, e.g. final censure might be enjoined or anger etc. commended on the grounds that they could be productive of the "eternal well-being of another"<sup>1</sup>, thus vainly hoping to fulfil Stephen Neill's admirable definition of *ἀγάπη*. Such an understanding would contradict Matthew.

Matthew puts content into the concept of loving and into lack of compassion. So he implicitly opposes any such single criterion of good behaviour as is proposed by "situation ethics" today.

The element of unconsciousness in goodness associated with lack of ostentation is evidently important to Matthew for not only is it heavily stressed in 25.31-46, but commanded in 6.3. More perhaps than any other N.T. writer Matthew probes the inner man: "out of the heart proceed evil thoughts. . ." (15.19) is a key verse which is connected with almost everything Matthew says. The pure in heart are blessed, the impure cursed (5.8, cf. 24.48 where the evil servant "says to himself, 'My master is delayed'" and proceeds to act unjustly and autonomously). Adultery is committed in the heart and this principle must be intended to apply to all other sins. In other words, attitude is interwoven with all the criteria and is often the overriding factor. Evil towards Jesus (9.5) and towards God (25.24) begins in the heart and the thoughts. It is the heart that is dull and hard and this leads to judicial blindness and failure to possess God's word (13.13-15, 19). In this regard, R. Bultmann has a fine passage in his sermon on 25.31-46: .

"Did Jesus say to those at the left to change their unconscious behaviour? To be conscious instead of unconscious? Yes, to be conscious is the one decisive point, namely that they had forgotten the deeper dimension of life. And this means, paradoxically, that they must be conscious of the fact that the

1 The Christian Character, London, 1955, p. 14.

judgement of the Lord depends upon what they do unconsciously, for the Lord takes into account not their doing but their being."<sup>1</sup>

Bultmann's emphasis on "being" solves the problem of judgement according to works (16.27) as it relates to the mercy of God expressed very strongly in Matthew (7.7-11; 18.23-35; 20.1-15; 20.28; etc.). Those who reject the mercy of God will be judged by works but those who ask for His mercy (6.12) will be declared blessed, not so much on account of the works they did, but on account of their attitude. The vineyard owner obviously gave the latecomers more than their due (20.14, 15). "The Kingdom prepared for you" is a reward quite disproportionate to the service rendered (25.34). We must thank God that, as Outka writes:

"Agapē sometimes means doing more than justice requires ..."<sup>2</sup>

On 20.1-16, Nygren writes:

"the offence (of the latecomers receiving the same pay) only ceases when the principle of justice itself is eliminated as inapplicable to the religious relationship".<sup>3</sup>

To put this another way from the pen of James to whom Matthew was in many respects akin:

"mercy triumphs over judgement" (Jas. 2.13).

On the other hand there is no room for presumption. Matthew would have agreed with Tennyson when he wrote:

"And he that shuts out love, in turn shall be  
Shut out by love, and on her thresholds lie  
Howling in outer darkness".<sup>4</sup>

Indeed it is evident from where Tennyson gathered the awesome thought.

1 "Sermon Mt. 25.31-46", Hören und Handeln, Festschrift für Ernst Wolf, Munchen, 1962, p. 50.

2 G. Outka, Agape: an Ethical Analysis, Yale, 1972, p. 80.

3. Anders Nygren, Agape and Eros: a Study of the Christian Idea of Love, (3 Vols.), London, 1932-39, Vol. 1, p. 86.

4 "The Dedication to 'The Palace of Art'", lines 14-16, The Complete Works of Tennyson, ed. Christopher Ricks, London, 1969.

In perturbation of spirit at the prospect of death Samuel Johnson was taken to task by Mrs Adams as follows: "'You seem, Sir, to forget the merits of our Redeemer'. [Replied] Johnson, 'Madam, I do not forget the merits of my Redeemer, but my Redeemer has said that he will set some on his right hand and some on his left.' He was in gloomy agitation, and said, 'I'll have no more on't.'"<sup>1</sup>

Few today share the disposition of Johnson on this occasion. Who can doubt that some of us most of the time and all of us some of the time (when we adopt a complacent attitude and act on the presumption that God's mercy is His sole characteristic) would not be morally and spiritually healthier with a tincture of Johnson's disquiet?

1 Boswell's Life of Johnson, ed. George Birkbeck Hill, revised by L. F. Powell, (6 Vols.), Oxford, 1934, Vol. 4 (1780-84), p. 300.

## APPENDIX A.

Some Comparisons between Matthew and the Mekilta

In establishing Matthew's Jewishness the Mekilta is of great importance.

Oesterley and Box<sup>1</sup> write:

"...this Midrash in its original form goes back to the beginning of the second century A.D. The disciples of Rabbi Jochanan ben Zakkai, viz. Ishmael, Akiba, and Eleazar of Modin, appear to have redacted the principal contents of the exposition on the basis of the still older and anonymous stratum of exegetical tradition. Mekilta, for the greater part, contains the comments and sayings of Rabbi Ishmael and his pupils. It will, therefore, be seen that a Midrash which embodies so much ancient material possesses a high value and interest; and this is especially the case from the point of view of New Testament study, for it reflects the Jewish religious standpoint as it existed in the time of the Apostles."

Lauterbach<sup>2</sup> writes in his Introduction "... the Mekilta shows itself to be one of the older tannaitic works (c. 10-80 A.D.). It contains very old material and has preserved teachings of the older Tannaim." In view of this it may be justifiable to devote a few paragraphs to the Mekilta. Since the Lauterbach edition is a standard edition all the references are to it. I will give the tractate reference only in the instances where greater importance may be attached to the saying noted.

A tendency to make the words of the prophets into a dead letter, a formula to be repeated and not a spirit to be emulated may be seen in the Mekilta. In 1.133, the interpretation of Jer. 23. 7-8 seems to indicate that the text should be repeated like a legal formula

1 W.O.E. Oesterley and G.H.Box, op. cit., p.69

2 Jacob Z. Lauterbach, Mekilta de-Rabbi Ishmael, (op. cit.,) p. xix. On page xxiv he adds "... the original draft of the Mekilta had its origin in the School of Ishmael. Danby (p.779) dates R. Ishmael c. A.D. 120-140. Though this is later than Matthew and the School of Ishmael is therefore later still, it is possible that Ishmael was drawing on an oral tradition which reached back to the time of Matthew or before.

as if the deliverance from exile were the last of God's major deliverances. This sort of ossification of the prophets was evidently what Matthew was talking about in 23.29ff. where it is evident that those denounced are prepared to revere a dead prophet but not to act in accord with the living Spirit by which he spoke. The prophetic word was to be understood just as the Torah and treated to scholarly dissection as if the bare letter of it was what mattered cf. Mt. 5.20; 12. 1-8.

It seems that the rabbis stopped at Jeremiah's remark because that was the letter of the word in the prophets. Had they been interested in the spirit, would they not have continued by referring to the Lord who delivered the Jews through Esther or the God who delivered Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego?

As we have seen on 25.26 Matthew put sloth along with wickedness and though there his main thrust is spiritual sloth (and he does not talk of gainful labour much elsewhere) there is no doubt a connexion between physical or mental and spiritual sloth. R.Meir said concerning repayment (Ex. 21.35-37);

"See how highly regarded labour is by Him who by His word caused the world to come into being. For an ox which has to perform labour, one must pay fivefold. For a sheep which does not perform labour, one pays only fourfold."

(Mek. 3.99).

"Strangers are beloved" according to Mek. 3.140 (Tr. Nez. 1.81ff.). This is based on Ps. 149.9; Gen. 23.4; Ps. 119.19; 1 Chron. 29.15; Ps. 39.13. The reason Abraham was not circumcised till he was ninety-nine was "so as not to close the door to future

proselytes". To give hospitality to the strangers is obviously very important to Matthew (25.31-46).

Proselytizing was highly regarded by the best of rabbinic thought as shown in the Mekilta (2.173). "When a man comes to you, wishing to become a convert to Judaism, as long as he comes in the name of God, for the sake of heaven ... befriend him and do not repel him." This may be compared with the zeal, however misplaced and restricted, shown by the scribes and Pharisees to make one proselyte in Mt. 23.15. It may be contrasted with 23.13, but there strangers are not necessarily the only people whom the scribes and Pharisees exclude. The teaching of the Mekilta on this matter seems to indicate that Oesterley is right in saying: "the impression is almost irresistible that denunciations of the Gospels are directed primarily against a Shammaite section".<sup>1</sup>

Universalism which at least begins to compare with that of Matthew especially in 28.18-20 appears in the Mek. 2.198 (Tr. Bah. 1.80ff.): "The Torah was given in public, openly in a free place ... (so) everyone wishing to accept it could come and accept it." This is in a sense only embryonic universalism as none but the Israelites, so far as we know, were at the site of Mt. Sinai when the law was given. More significant is the fact that the Mekilta teaches that the Torah was indeed offered to other nations and refused by them (2.267 Tr. Bah. 5.65ff.).

The denunciations (Mt. 15.1-12 which includes the Sadducees and Mt. 23 passim) were, if Oesterley<sup>1</sup> is correct, directed at the

<sup>1</sup> Sayings of the Jewish Fathers, p.xvii.

School of Shammai. (Only on the divorce issue (5.31,32; 19.1-9) does Matthew's Jesus appear to be in a measure of agreement with that school.) The liberal stance of the Mekilta on the optional wearing of phylacteries, for example, supports the view of Oesterley and Box for this, as we have noted above (p.260) is not the one that Matthew is attacking in 23.5. This strengthens the case for Matthew's universalism because it indicates that he was not attempting to exclude all the scribes and Pharisees.

Lauterbach writes: "... it is full of expressions of a broad universalism not so frequently found in the other Midrashim."<sup>1</sup> The above quotations are among the more striking that can be found in the Mekilta.

With regard to Matthew's emphasis on inwardness and intention which we have discussed particularly under 5.28, the Mekilta plainly has a parallel view in the case of stealing. In Mek. 2.115 (Tr. Nez. 15.20-29) it is explained why the thief pays double and the robber only the principal: "The thief, as though such a thing were possible, regarded the Eye above as if it could not see and the Ear as if it could not hear ...." The author of this saying, R. Jochanan ben Zakkai goes on to quote in support Is. 29.15; Ps. 94.7; Ezek. 9.9.

Further recognition of the importance of intent is found in Mek. 3.105, Tr. Nez. 13.3f. Among the seven classes of thief defined are: "He who urges his neighbour to be his guest, when in his heart he does not mean to invite him", and "he who offers gifts knowing they will not be accepted."

1 Loc. cit., p.xix.



These examples are given to confirm the Jewishness of Matthew. The Mekilta has no emphasis on judgement comparable with that of Matthew.

Matthew shows that he is keenly aware of the fact noted in the Mekilta (1.55) that the untying of the sandal thong was a duty not done by a Hebrew slave so he replaces this (Mk. 1.7; Lk. 3.16) with: "whose sandals I am not worthy to carry" (3.11). Presumably Matthew was averse to the inference that the greatest man yet born, the Baptist, herald of judgement, was not a Jew.

A valuable reference to right and left occurs in Mek. 2.41, Shir. 5.57. One interpretation of Ex. 15.6: "Thy right hand, O Lord, glorious in power" is, it says: "When the Israelites fail to do the will of God, they make his right hand to be like his left hand". The value of this, coupled with the points made by Oesterley and Box (quoted above, p.278), lies especially in the mention of failure which ties up with the failure of the "goats" in 25.31-46.

## Appendix B.

Some Points of Comparison Between Matthew and the Pirke Aboth

Oesterley writes in strong terms of the Pirke Aboth: "indispensable for a thorough understanding of the New Testament"<sup>1</sup> and "its importance for the study and understanding of the New Testament can hardly be exaggerated".<sup>1a</sup> The reasons for these affirmations are that it is so good an example of the phraseology, thought and doctrine of Judaism and that much of it is so near the time of the N.T.

There are a number of striking points of comparison, similarities and contrasts, between Matthew and the Pirke Aboth. Several of these are mentioned by Oesterley<sup>2</sup> in the introduction of his translation. I propose to note some of them and a few others not mentioned by Oesterley all of which reveal either Matthew's Jewishness or that he wrote as a foil to rabbinic Judaism. In the latter case it will be seen that he could not have done so as well without a detailed knowledge of rabbinic sayings. The date of the sayings ranges from those of Simeon the Just<sup>3</sup> who became high priest in 226 B.C. and R. Joshua ben Levi<sup>4</sup> mid third century A.D. (The three sayings by the Men of the Great Synagogue cannot be dated<sup>5</sup>). Sayings that are later than Matthew may nonetheless reflect his Jewishness, for, if Matthew were indeed Jewish in outlook, and the various authors of the Aboth no doubt dipped into the same well of oral tradition.

Of Chapter 6, Oesterley writes that it is: "universally recognized as a later addition full of borrowings from earlier chapters" and therefore it also may be full of borrowings from earlier thoughts. Of that chapter Oesterley adds: "... the greater part of the material is anonymous".<sup>6</sup>

1 W.O.E. Oesterley, *The Sayings of the Jewish Fathers*, p.xi.  
All the quotations are from this work unless otherwise stated.  
As before, Ab. is used as the abbreviation for the Pirke Aboth.

1a Loc. cit., p.xvii.

2 Loc. cit., pp.xii-xiv.

3 Loc. cit., p.xv.

4 Loc. cit., p.57, n.1.

5 Loc. cit., p.1.

6 Loc. cit., p.x.

Except where noted all the quotations in this appendix are from Oesterley's translation.

The substitution of heaven for God occurs quite often: Ab. 2.10,16; 4.14,16; 5.16 and this is similar to Matthew 3.2; 4.17; 5.3,19,20; 8.11, etc. The Aboth references are to the phrase "the name of heaven" except in 4.16 where it is "the fear of heaven". Matthew's references are to "the Kingdom of heaven".

In Ab. 3.7 (second half of the second century) we read: "Where ten men (the minimum of a congregation) are occupied with the Torah the Shekinah is among them". This is as far as Oesterley takes the comparison with 18.20 "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them". Certainly the substitution of "with the Torah" by "in my name" and the Shekinah by "I" (Jesus) is impressive, but it is also remarkable that R. Chalaphtha went on to claim that the same could be said of five, three, two and one<sup>1</sup> and supported each with an O.T. text. So he got down to a figure well below the minimum in Jewish tradition and below even that of Matthew, though one could not make up a gathering and so is scarcely relevant. Is it too much to say that R. Chalaphtha knew of Matthew's verse and decided to make it go one better and render it in terms of orthodox Judaism and not that of a Min?

Matthew's saying reveals a high Christology. He is equating Jesus with the Shekinah, something ineffably venerable, if not equal to God himself.

Ab. 3.7 is not entirely original because Ab. 3.3 (R. Chananiah ben Teradyon, martyred 135 A.D.) had said: ... where two sit together and are occupied with the words of the Torah, there is the Shekinah among them".<sup>2</sup>

1 R.Travers Herford, Pirke Aboth, New York, 1925, p.67,n. writes: "The passage referring to one who sits alone in 3.3 has all the appearance of an afterthought." This applies to 3.7 also, see loc. cit., p.77,n. where the association of the two rabbinic authors is mentioned.

2 For "is" Herford, loc.cit.,p.66, renders more literally "rests" from the post-biblical Hebrew (נִשָּׁא) in both 3.3 and 3.7.

Ab. 3.7 and 3.3 both use the same proof text for the congregation of two, Mal. 3.16. This makes it likely that R. Chalapha borrowed the basic idea from R. Chananiah and simply elaborated it. Still there is a possibility that his elaboration was an answer to Matthew's verse.

The same basic idea is found in Ber. 7.3 where R. Akiba (c. 120-140 A.D. some of whose other sayings are quoted in the Aboth) said: "What do we find in the synagogue? It is all one whether there are many or few, they say, 'bless ye the Lord who is to be blessed' (n.4. 'The name of God is used in the Benediction which needs the presence of no more than ten'. cf. Ber. 7.1)".<sup>1</sup>

Oesterley writes:

"Ultimately, the idea of God's glory and of His indwelling became identified. But inasmuch as this sign of the presence of God was conceived as something concrete, i.e. a cloud, it was in a certain sense differentiated from God Himself. This it was which in later days gave a handle to the idea that the medium of God's indwelling itself partook of the nature of a quasi-personality."<sup>2</sup>

A saying of Samuel the Small (Ab. 4.24, 1st century A.D.) "rejoice not when thine enemy falleth" is quite a step on the way to loving your enemies. (Mt. 5.44). But, as Samuel the Small was the author of the Birkath ha-Minim, this displays the striking difference between Matthew's Jesus and a rabbi. True, Jesus pronounced woes on the scribes and Pharisees (23 passim), but while possibly equal to curses, were delivered more in sorrow than anger, as we have noted. Evidence for this lies in the chapter of woes itself in the metaphor of the hen and chickens spoken surely with a sob over the citadel of his foes rather than in wrath: "How often would I have gathered you ... and you would not" (23.37). As this is a "Q" saying we cannot plead that the heartache is peculiar to Matthew but it is nonetheless significant that he inserted it in view of the fact that his "woes" far surpass those of the other

1 Danby, op. cit., p.8.

2 Loc. cit., p.30, n.7.

evangelist both in number and in severity. Moreover, there is a distinction between public enemies of the Gospel (5.44) and the private enemy of whom Samuel the Small was presumably speaking, since he uses the singular of the personal pronoun. The sense in which the latter used the word was possibly that of a fellow-Jew from whom one was temporarily estranged or at least with whom reconciliation was possible. Yet the injunction has a sting in its tail "... lest the Lord see it, and be displeased and turn away his anger from him". This sting is present in his source (Prov. 24.17,18). The full quotation from Proverbs (i.e. v.18 as well as v.17) possibly arises from the heresy-hunting trait in Samuel the Small's character. An enemy would then be an apostate Jew or an inveterate heathen, for one would not go so far as to accuse the rabbi of personal spite. We may note in this last phrase too the yearning for the wrath of God to fall on such. It shows an emphasis on judgement that is shared by Matthew but also a different slant. The warnings of Matthew's Jesus are designed to help listeners to avoid judgement, see especially 5.29,30 but the rabbi is concerned that judgement should be consummated. The only theme that is nearly comparable in Matthew is the quotation from Isaiah in Mt. 13.14,15. Still there is a difference in that those to be punished are hearers who wilfully reject the message. In the case of the rabbinic saying a third party is to be spared the wrath of God because of the lack of sympathy of an enemy, i.e. a negative message, a sin of omission on the part of a Jew - and more - for it amounts to an attitude of gloating hatred. This attitude on the part of a servant of God would make the third party excusable in the eyes of God. There is a profound truth here but not one that Matthew brings out, though he does appeal to self interest in seeking to redress a wrong when one is the injurer 5.25f. and in offering forgiveness when one is the injured party (6.14,15; 18.23-35, especially the last verse).

The wise as a technical term for Jewish scholars is found often in the Pirke Aboth: 1.17; 2.11; 5.9,17; 6.1,4,10 (in 6.10 a whole city of them!). Matthew is the only evangelist who uses the term in the same sense (23.34). In the general sense Matthew uses the word much more often than Luke. Mark does not use it at all. People are to be judged for rejecting the wise.

The idea of reward is common both to Matthew and the Pirke Aboth. Again Matthew employs the word much more often than Mark or Luke (5.12,46; 6.1,2,4,5,6,16,18; 10.41 (bis), 42; 16.27); Mark, only once and Luke, three times. In the Pirke Aboth it occurs at 1.3; 2.20; 5.1,26; 6.5. In the last two it is reward according to work which has some affinity with Matthew. In one of the later sayings by Rabbi (Judah ha-Nasi, c.136-217 A.D.)<sup>1</sup> we note the calculating, contractual element in rabbinic thinking: "Reckon the loss (involved in the fulfilling) of a precept against its penalty and the advantage (gained by the committing) of a sin against its penalty" (Ab. 2.1). This is a far cry from the unconscious goodness and badness of the sheep and goats in Mt. 25.31-46, or from not letting your left hand know what your right hand does (Mt. 6.3) (though Herford<sup>2</sup> finds, in regard to the concept of reward, an affinity between Ab. 2.1 and Mt. 5.12; 6.1,6).

On the other hand in Ab. 6.6 we read that the wise man "claims no merit for himself"<sup>3</sup> and in the same chapter, verse 1: "whosoever is occupied with the Torah for its own sake ... is worth the whole world".<sup>4</sup> "The whole world" has obvious connections with the same phrase in 16.26 and the idea of the whole verse in each case is comparable, but Mark has a parallel (Mk. 8.36) so this does not make Matthew distinctively Jewish

1 So dated by Oesterley, loc. cit., p.xviii.

2 Loc. cit., p.40.n.

3 Author probably R.Jehoshua ben Levi, mid third century A.D. Oesterley, loc. cit., p.76 n.1.

4 Author R.Meir, mid second century, loc. cit., p.53 n.1.

in the choice of phrase as the choice was not his.

The paradox expressed in Ab. 3.22: "the world is judged by grace yet all is according to the abundance of work"<sup>1</sup> is not so put in as many words by Matthew. Judgement for every man is according to works (not grace, 16.27) and yet reward is according to grace (20.9). Thus Matthew sees the paradox, though he would word it differently.

It is surprising to find a rabbi who says as does R. Jochanan ben Berokah (c. 90-150 A.D.)<sup>2</sup> that a deliberate sin is the same as an unintentional one in this instance, "profaning the Name" (Ab. 4.5) Matthew (5.28) shows that the intention itself is sin and we may compare the inwardness of anger (Mt. 5.21) and adultery in the heart (Mt. 5.28). If "profaning the Name" were restricted to sins of speech one might argue on the basis that the unguarded word revealed character or on the principle put forward in Mt. 12.34, "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks".

Matthew shares with Luke the sense of urgency in response to the Gospel. In Luke it comes out forcibly in the parable of the Rich Fool (Lk. 12.16-21) and in Matthew in that of the wise and foolish bridesmaids; in both, in the parable of the wicked servant (24.48-51; Luke 12.45-47). It is probable that Luke is Jewish too in this regard for one does not find a sense of urgency in the heathen literature of the time. At any rate, the Pirke Aboth (2.14) has a famous admonition: "Repent one day before thy death"<sup>3</sup> and this is explained in b. Shab. 153a as: "Repent today for death may come any day". Warnings to turn from evil are often fraught with urgency in the O.T.; Ps. 95.8 is but one warning against procrastination.

It is significant that to be repentant and faithful is much commended in the Pirke Aboth (5.2; 6.1) and this is also the case in

1 The author is R. Akiba, killed 135 A.D. Loc. cit., p.41 n.1.

2 Oesterley, loc. cit., p.49 n.7.

3 The author of this was Eliezer ben Hyrcanos who died at the beginning of the second century A.D. Oesterley, loc. cit., p.21 n.6. See also Danby, op. cit., p.799, for dating.

Matthew (righteous - 10.41; 13.43; 23.35 bis; 25.37.46; faithful - 24.45; 25.21 bis). To be faithful is equally important to Luke but he has only four references to righteous people, only three of which are peculiar to him (Lk. 1.6; 18.9; 23.47 and of these three 18.9 is about the self-righteous). Mark has only one reference (Mk. 2.17 par. Mt. 9.13; Lk. 5.32). Not merely in the number of times the words are used, but in the stress laid and the eternal consequences following on these two qualities, does Matthew show Jewishness. He does so distinctively in the case of being righteous for this is a favourite term of O.T. writers.

Matthew evidently holds that almsgiving is a large element in righteousness (6.1-4). The Pirke Aboth lends some support to the view that this is a Jewish trait. The word <sup>72</sup>73 occurs in 2.8; 5.15 and in 6.1. Not much weight can be given to the last for the context does not involve alms as clearly as Mt. 6.1 and its author is R.Meir, mid-second century A.D.<sup>1</sup> The text reads in part: "whosoever is occupied in the Torah for its own sake merits many things ... he loves mankind ... he pleases mankind ... (it) fits him to become righteous and pious, upright and faithful ... and puts him near to the side of merit ..." Thus the context of righteous partly concerns the treatment of one's fellow-men. The author of Ab. 2.8 is probably Hillel<sup>2</sup> which puts it firmly in the way of influencing Matthew. We may quote those parts which imply judgement and indicate that righteousness is in a context of works: "The more flesh, the more worms, the more treasures, the more care, the more maidservants, the more lewdness, the more menservants, the more theft, the more women, the more witchcrafts, the more Torah, the more life<sup>3</sup> ... the more righteousness, the more peace ..." "He who hath gained words of Torah for himself hath gained for himself life in the world to come." The

1 Oesterley loc. cit., p.53 n.1.

2 i.e. probably the great Hillel is meant, loc. cit., p.18 n.5. The date of his activity was B.C.30 - A.D. 10, Oesterley loc. cit., p.9 n.4.

3 Loc. cit., p.20, n.3, "i.e. eternal life".



immediate context of righteousness here is peace and peace is often connected with obedience to God's commandments, e.g. Ab. 5.15 is anonymous and may be later than Matthew, but it may nonetheless be taken as representative, especially in view of what Oesterley writes in his notes: "𐤀𐤒𐤓 in neo-Hebrew = almsgiving; cf. Is. XXXII.17; Mt. VI.1-4"<sup>1</sup> and: "almsgiving is righteousness par excellence".<sup>2</sup>

Ab. 5.15 is anonymous, but like Ab. 6.1 may be taken, in this connexion, to be representative in view of what Oesterley says above. The beginning of Ab. 5.15 is: "(There are) four types of character in those who give alms". Then the author goes on to speak of the four attitudes towards giving, so that 𐤀𐤒𐤓 here can only mean alms. It also proceeds to speak of the evil eye (for which see above, pp.122 ff.).

If the assumption that the anonymous saying and that of R. Meir are representative in regard to righteousness and Oesterley plainly believes so, then there is a close affinity with Mt. 6.1-4. In Mt. 6.1 *δικαιοσύνη* rendered 'piety' in the R.S.V., must include almsgiving because it is qualified by *νομῶν*. But it is probably more than almsgiving even there and is used in distinction from *ἐλεημοσύνη* Mt. 6.2,3,4 for that reason and because it is in the introductory position. Mt. 5.6 makes it unlikely that *δικαιοσύνη* is restricted to almsgiving but probably includes an element of God's salvation.

The word righteous enters Matthew's theme of judgement at 13.43 and 25.46. In the former, the righteous are the harvest of the good wheat seed which probably means deeds of loving kindness as this is the unmistakable purport of 25.46, seen in context.

In the same verse of the Aboth we read: "Everything is given as an earnest (of repayment)" and this also has common ground with Mt. (25.14-30). In Mt.25.25 the slothful servant returned to his

1 Oesterley, loc. cit., p.20 n.7.

2 Loc. cit., p.69 n.5.

lord only the bare due.

Something like "to him who has shall be given" (25.28) appears in Ab. 4.2: "... the reward of precept is precept ..."

Gehenna is preferred by Matthew (and Mark) to Hades and apart from its O.T. origin it was the word for hell among Matthew's Jewish contemporaries. Evidence is in Ab. 5.21: "the disciples of Bileam (Balaam) go down to Gehinnom".

The immense respect in which Abraham<sup>1</sup> was held by the Jews is illustrated by Ab. 5.1 where he is said to have received the reward of all ten generations since Noah. It was possible, however, to render the covenant with Abraham ineffectual (Ab. 3.15). One of the ways of doing this was by profaning holy things (cf. Mt. 7.6). Matthew points out (3.9; par. Lk. 3.8) that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from stones, so this puts "Q" in line with Jewish thought in this respect.

In the Aboth. (3.6) we read: "Whoever takes upon him the yoke of the Torah from him is removed the yoke of the government and the yoke of worldly care ..."<sup>2</sup> I do not believe that Matthew was thinking primarily about the yoke of the government when he wrote (11.28) that Jesus' invitation was to "all who labour and are heavy laden". But part of the meaning of Jesus' easy yoke may have been to set men free from anxiety about taxes, one of the elements in the yoke of government.<sup>3</sup> Also, when Jesus was asked about the paying of taxes to Rome, he replied: "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's (22.21) implying not a grievous burden but a return for what was owed for the benefits of the Roman peace, Roman roads, etc. When tax was demanded (probably the temple tax because it was a half shekel)<sup>4</sup> Jesus set the example of paying it without fuss (17.24-27, peculiar to Matthew). So, of the kinds of yoke<sup>5</sup> mentioned in Ab. 3.6, the

1 cf. Mekilta 1.218, Tr. Bes. 4.29, where it is said that God opened the Red Sea because of the merit of Abraham.

2 R. Nechuniah ben ha-Kanah is the author of this. He lived during the greater part of the first century A.D., Oesterley, loc. cit., p.33 n.3.

3 Oesterley, loc. cit., p.33, n.5.

4 R.C. Trench, Notes on the Miracles of Our Lord, London, 1884, p.405ff.

5 For the relevance of this to my theme see Appendix I.

yoke of worldly care was probably uppermost in Matthew's mind when he wrote 11.28-30. If so, it would have broad support in the Synoptics: "Do not be anxious ..." Mt. 6.25 (par. Lk. 12.22). Among the thorns which choke the word are "the cares of the world" 13.22 (par. Lk. 4.19; Lk. 8.14). Martha suffered such cares (Lk. 10.41) and was rebuked by Jesus and there *periporeo* is the cognate verb of the noun in 13.22 and parallels. These cares are perhaps more basic and universal, though often connected with "the yoke of government". But Matthew may have been thinking of the yoke of the Torah in view of the denunciation of 23.4: "They bind heavy burdens and grievous to bear and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves will not move them with their finger."

We may conclude that those commended in Mt. 11.28-30 are those struggling under the weight of the Torah, striving to obey the heavy commandments and those denounced in 23.4 are those who neglect "the weightier matters of the law" (23.23) whilst fulfilling the trivia. In this case Matthew's primary emphasis would be the relief afforded by Jesus to those who are earnestly trying to obey the Torah and finding it hard. If so, Matthew has written a foil for Ab. 3.6.

Another reference to the yoke appears in Ab. 6.6 (R. Jehoshua be Levi, mid third century A.D.) where it is something to be borne with an associate. Although a late saying it may well have an earlier source. A yoke of oxen is obviously a double yoke. Evidently the scribes and Pharisees, notably those of Jerusalem, were of a haughty spirit in that they were unwilling to accept the yoke of Jesus and be as it were in double harness with him, dependent on him and to change the metaphor, dependent as chickens on their mother: "O Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered your children together ... and you would not" 23.37 (par. Lk. 13.34).

Ab. 1.7: "... associate not with an evil man", cf. Ps. 1.1, has something in common with Mt. 18.17 and there might be a similarity to Mt. 7.6 if the Didache's interpretation of "dogs" is valid, (Did. Chap. 9) (see below, p. 321).

Matthew at this point seems rather to make a contrast with the Aboth, cf. the portrait of Jesus as the friend of taxgatherers and sinners (11.18).

The universalism of Hillel is reflected by Matthew especially in 28.18-20. Hillel (Ab. 1.12) said: "Be of the disciples of Aaron loving peace ..., loving men (lit. *me'at* creation)<sup>1</sup> and bringing them nigh unto the law." In Mt. 28.18 all nations corresponds to "creation" and in 28.19,20 "making disciples" and "teaching them" corresponds to bringing them nigh unto the law. Matthew also attacks the exclusiveness of the School of Shammai in 23.15. This exclusiveness may be represented by Shir. 1.3 which states that one pious person is produced by the Gentiles each year (as quoted above when dealing with 23.15). The reference to "one" is significantly identical with Mt. 23.15 though the assessment 'pious person', 'child of hell' is strikingly different. The comparison between 23.15 and Shir. 1.3 cannot be taken far, in any case, as there was a distinction between righteous proselytes and God-fearing Gentiles.<sup>2</sup>

In Ab. 4.13 we find that: "He who is hard to provoke and hard to pacify, his gain is cancelled by his loss." This is a nice balancing of the entries on the credit and debit side which is quite out of harmony with Matthew. He records Jesus as saying: "He who is not with me is against me" (12.30a).

Insofar as this matter is one in which the Aboth is typical of rabbinic thought, it can only be said to be a foil to Matthew or vice versa depending on the date, of which we cannot be sure in this verse.

Strong references to divine judgement in the hereafter appear in Ab. 4.29. The dead are to be raised in order that God may be seen to

1 Oesterley, loc. cit., p.10.

2 See Moore, Judaism, op. cit., Vol. 1, p.325f.

be a just Judge. These words do not appear in Matthew, but the thought is implicit in 12.20,36; 13.40-42, 49f.; 16.27. On judgement see also p.34 above.

Altogether Matthew's Jewishness is abundantly illustrated by the Pirke Aboth.

It is hoped that enough has been said here and in notes amply to justify the claims of Oesterley on behalf of the Pirke Aboth and to apply these claims to the understanding of Matthew in particular.

Some of these references have no direct bearing on the criteria of judgement. However, they do help to build up the picture of Matthew's Jesus. Matthew is Jewish and his Jesus is Jewish.

For further reference to this, see Appendix I.

APPENDIX CA Comparison Between the Ethics of Matthew and of Paul.

Perhaps Matthew would not go so far as St. Paul in the latter's doctrine of the depravity of the human will (Rom. 7.18, etc.), for in 12.33 he writes "either make the tree good and his fruit good or ..." (and this incidentally is an argument for generalizing 7.15-20). This might mean, taken on its own, that a man unaided by God could will the tree (character) to be good with the consequence of good fruit (acts). But we cannot isolate a text in this manner. The immediate context is the Beelzebul controversy where Jesus had just revealed his power. The question was "by whom are devils cast out?" and the answer "by the Spirit of God" (12.27,28).

Matthew clearly recognises human sinfulness "forgive us our debts" (6.12): "you, being evil" (7.11). Therefore if he did not see the need for divine assistance it is impossible to explain why he wrote "be ... perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect" (5.48).

"Forgive us our debts": poses a problem if we take "as we forgive our debtors" to be simultaneous or even prior to it. The idiomatic English translation of the Greek text preferred by the U.B.S. Editorial Committee (see Bruce Metzger, op. cit., p.16) is the perfect, "as we have forgiven". The preferred Greek reading is the aorist, *ἀφῆκεν*. Metzger, however, admits that this is a mechanical translation of the Aramaic "present perfect" which possibly was the original and that the Greek present would be a more idiomatic translation.

In any case, Matthew is not teaching that we must forgive others by the act of our unaided will, then we will be forgiven. This would be a distortion of so much that he says elsewhere. On this matter, see W.D. Davies, *SSM*, p.96, where he says that Jesus' life reveals the essence of the love of God as well as his words. See also J. Jeremias, The Sermon on the Mount, p.25ff on the theme that the Gospel preceded the Sermon. See also p.39 above.

It would also be taking these phrases in the Lord's Prayer out of context. No one could seriously claim, for example, that Matthew is unaware that God's perfection is eternally prior to man's (5.45) or that God's will is not done in heaven before it is prayed for on earth (6.10).

The question of the time factor still remains. The problem is less acute if we understand the prayer to be one for disciples. Then it would mean that we have already received salvation and are now praying for the pardon involved in sanctification. In this case it would be akin to the promise in 1 John 1.7, "if we walk in the light ... the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us" - not "has cleansed us", but a continuous process (καθαρίζεται).

The parable of the two debtors is difficult to interpret because the man with the astronomical debt appears to have been forgiven and the forgiveness is later withdrawn. But was he really forgiven? Was it not just an offer which his later conduct showed he had not accepted? St. Paul commands "be kind ... forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave (ἐχάρισατο) you", (Eph. 4.32; Col. 3.13). He does not say what will happen if you do not forgive one another in this context. But elsewhere he makes it very plain that he is no party to cheap grace - "All were baptised into Moses in the cloud and in the (Red) sea, but with many of them (cf. "many" and "few" Mt. 7.14; 20.16) God was not pleased" (1 Cor. 10.25). "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself" (2 Cor. 5.17) but all were not reconciled for to some, Paul and his fellow workers', life and witness was "a fragrance of death" (2 Cor. 2.16). In The Death of Christ, Fifth Edition, London, 1905, pp.144, 5 and The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation, London: New York: Toronto, 1917, p.328, James Denney argues cogently that reconciling means offering reconciliation. If not, Paul would not have needed to implore the Corinthians, "be reconciled to God" (2 Cor. 5.20).

Ephesians begins with rapturous good news, yet good works are not an optional extra but a matter of inevitability for the predestined believer (Eph. 1.4; 2.10).

In Romans (8.1; 12.1), two key points in the Epistle, we find the sense of "therefore, in view of the preceding". In the first instance (8.1 <sup>2/ρκ</sup>) it comes just after the description in chapter 7 of the civil war being waged in the human heart and of the helplessness of man - even Christian man - to win it without Christ but of confidence in deliverance through Christ. Chapter 7 cannot be restricted to pre-Christian consciousness, as the keenness of the realization of sin only comes to those who know Christ. The second instance introduced by ~~οὐ~~ comes immediately after a passage on the mercy of God (Rom. 11.29-31) and a doxology (vv. 31-36). To whom is the promise addressed: "There is now therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (8.1) but the ones defined as those \*who behave not according to the promptings of their lower nature but according to the promptings of God's Spirit"? (8.2, J.B.P.). This does not seem a far cry from what we learn in Matthew's theology, for instance, in the promise annexed to the peacemakers (5.9b). McArthur (op. cit., p.71) has noted some striking parallels between the ethics of Paul and the teaching of Jesus:

Rom. 12.14 (bless persecutors)	Mt. 5.44
Rom. 12.17-21 (overcome evil with good)	Mt. 5.43f.
Rom. 13.8-10 (the whole law summed up in love)	Mt. 22.39-40
	19.17-19

On Mt. 19.17-19 it should be specially noted that he adds the command to love your neighbour to what he found in Mark and puts it last, the climactic position.

Rom. 14.10 (Why do you judge your brother?)	Mt. 7.1
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To these might be added:

Rom. 12.18 (live at peace with all men)	Mt. 5.9
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Matthew's emphasis is different from that of Paul, but it is not fair to claim that his doctrine is contrary to Paul's or antipathetic to justification by faith. The unforgiving debtor demonstrated that he was deficient in faith as well as mercy.



AuthorityParallels

9. 6 "The Son of man has power on earth to forgive sins."

Mk. 2. 10; Lk. 5. 24

In giving the power to the Son of Man Matthew indicates (9. 8) that God had given it to men. So the Son of Man is a representative man. He is every bit a man, he came eating and drinking (11. 19). It is necessary to point out that to speak against him is forgivable. This may mean that it was a serious matter, because he is so important. On the other hand the fact that he is able to be spoken against (12. 32) shows he is down at the level where men's scorn can reach him, thus we often get the same ambiguity in the use of the term which is quite clear in 9. 16, taken along with "men" in 9. 8.

All three Synoptics mention that the crowd glorified God for the cure of the paralytic. Matthew alone gives the reason that God had given such power "to men". This is an awkward and inexplicable sentence to those who would maintain that the Son of Man is a grand title which comes marching into the N.T. fully clad with exalted meaning.

12. 8, "The Son of man is lord of the sabbath."

Mk. 2. 28; Lk. 6. 5

12. 32, "And whoever says a word against the Son of man  
will be forgiven."

Mk. 3. 23; Lk. 12. 32

13. 37, "He who gave the good seed is the Son of man."

No parallels

The initiator of the Kingdom, good sower and owner of the  
field is obviously a pre-eminent person. The devil is a mere squatter.

13. 41, 42, "The Son of man will send his angels and they  
will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin  
and evil-doers, and will throw them into the furnace  
of fire."

No parallels

The figure is one of immense authority. Notice that, as in  
25. 31, the angels are his angels, and the Kingdom, his Kingdom.

16. 13, "Who do men say that the Son of man is?"

Mk. 8. 27; Lk. 9. 18b

This question would scarcely have been necessary in this form  
if the Son of Man had been a recognized messianic title. Mark and  
Luke have *pe* in place of "Son of man" and are more original at  
this point. Matthew has a concern which overrides the need to cling  
to the original, namely to emphasize the Divinity with which he invests  
the Son of Man.

Mk. 8. 38

16. 27 " ... the Son of man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay every man for what he has done."

Matthew associates Jesus' return in judgement with the Son of Man.

Note here that the Son of Man not only has angels but a Father.

Mk. 9. 13

17. "...Tell no one the vision, until the Son of man is raised..."

This is interesting in that the messianic secret is connected with the Transfiguration and with the Son of Man. The very term Son of Man, if M. Black is correct, is a kind of messianic secret - "fitted to conceal as well as to reveal ..." (AAGA, p.211). The saying might support the contention of J. Jeremias (N.T. Theol. Vol. 1, p. 276) that Jesus is not yet Son of Man but Son of Man designate, but if we accept that we must show Vermees to be wrong.

If Matthew is giving sovereignty to the Son of Man in this text he is not alone for the saying has a Marcan parallel.

Lk. 22. 28-30

19. 28 "When the Son of man shall sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

The Lucan parallel omits the term Son of Man.

If there is any connection between Matthew's and Daniel's use of the

word 'man' this text would provide an interesting link in the motif of corporateness: "the saints of the most high" (Dan. 7. 18, 21, 22, 25, 27), "you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones" (Mt. 19. 28 par. Lk. 22. 30).

24. 27 "As the lightning ... so will be the coming of the Son of man".

Lk. 24. 24

The emphasis is on maximum visibility, "from East to West" not from North to South - there are no East and West poles; cf. Ps. 103.12, "as far as the East is from the West" - an infinite distance. The context, however, is one of judgement and in the next verse the awesome warning occurs of the carcase and the vultures.

24. 30a " ... then will appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven."

No parallel

This part of the verse is peculiar to Matthew. The context is that of the parousia and of the judgement which accompanies it. This is indicated in the previous verse where we read of the stars falling, etc. Stars could, of course, mean good powers (cf. Rev. 1. 20 etc.), but here the general sense is one of catastrophe, necessarily involving evil powers. Sun, moon, and stars must be taken in the malignant sense in which the host

of heaven is used in the Old Testament, e.g. Deut. 4. 19; 17. 3;

2 Kings 23. 5; Jer. 8. 2.

The subsequent clause is even more explicit on the theme of judgement, the (godless) tribes of the earth mourning because of the arrival of the Son of Man. In verse 31 again the theme of judgement appears in the gathering of the elect, implying separation by the angels instigated by the Son of Man.

24. 30b "And they will see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory".

Mk. 13. 26; Lk. 21. 27

Comparing Matthew, ἐπὶ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ

with Mark, ἐν νεφέλαις

and Luke, ἐν νεφέλῃ

Mark omits sign and mourning

discloses a little touch whereby Matthew heightens literally and by addition his Son of Man doctrine.

Clouds in the O.T. are in any case the chariots of God. Matthew's alterations are therefore unnecessary, but indicative of his theological inclinations. This addition of τοῦ οὐρανοῦ might indicate that Matthew has absorbed the Cloud-Man motif from Daniel.

24. 31 "and he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call and they will gather his elect from the four winds from one end of heaven to the other".

Mk. 13. 27  
(Mark omits the  
trumpet call)

This ranks as a Son of Man saying - owing to its close connection with the previous verse: notice the great authority "his angels" as compared to Mark's "the angels". Notice also the trumpet, associated in the O.T. with jubilation, with acceptable sacrifice, with coronation and (perhaps especially relevant) with summons to a holy war (Zech. 9. 14 etc.).

The only other occurrence of trumpet in the Gospels is in Mt. 6. 6 where it is used to attract attention, but there it is strictly localized.

On trumpet in this passage James Moffat wrote:

"The context especially in Mt. is a Jewish Christian application of the older Messianic tradition (cf. e.g. Is. 27. 13; Zech. 2. 10 (LXX)) which depicted the scattered members of Israel being summoned together by a trumpet blast at the Messiah's advent. The figure was natural for the trumpet blast denoted the approach of majesty. "Power whether spiritual or physical, is the meaning of the trumpet", Fitzgerald's Letters, 1. 92. But it is rather as a rallying summons than as a herald of royalty or even an awakener of sleepers, that the trumpet is employed as a pictorial detail in the passage before us".<sup>1</sup>

1. DCG, Vol. 2, p. 766.

We may venture to suggest that in view of the exalted content which Matthew puts into the phrase, Son of Man, the idea of the approach of the King had bulked larger in Matthew's mentions of trumpet than Moffatt admitted. In 1 Kings 1. 34, 39, 41 the trumpet was a crucial element in the proclamation of a king and in Ps. 47. 4 of God's Kingship. It is possible that while the Resurrection was Jesus' day of proclamation (cf. Acts 13. 33; Heb. 1. 5; 5. 5) the day of his Second Coming was for Matthew the day of his coronation (cf. 25. 35). The Son of Man is for Matthew always King potentially.

In the O.T. the trumpet could only be blown by, or on the devolved powers of, a high authority, eg. Ex. 19. 13, 16, 19; 20. 18; 1 Sam. 13. 3; 2 Sam. 2. 28; Ezek. 33. 3 ff., etc.

The gathering of his elect, as Moffatt observed, is a messianic act. It is done in obedience to the Son of Man, thus further reinforcing the authority of that being.

24. 37b "As were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of man."

Lk. 17. 26

Men were preoccupied with mundane existence when suddenly, as they

had not heeded the warning, the flood came.

24. 39b "They did not know till the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of man."

Lk. 17. 30

Implicit is the idea that ignorance is no excuse. Here the Son of Man is to usher in complete destruction of those who simply ignore him.

(Luke omits "they did not know")

24. 44 "The Son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect."

No parallel

The message is one of warning against unpreparedness (the context is that of the housekeeper and the thief). Readiness for the parousia must be inward, for the two men in the field and the two women at the mill are outwardly the same (vv. 40, 41), yet their fate is opposite. Clearly the Son of Man is Judge as the division of men takes place at his arrival. (The Lucan parallel has the men in bed, Lk. 17. 24.)

25.31 "When the Son of man comes in his glory and all the angels with him."

No parallel

Peculiar to Matthew, this text is of prime value in arriving at his understanding of the Son of Man or, if we follow Vermes, we may say rather the meaning that Matthew injects into the phrase.

26. 24b "Woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born."

Mk. 14. 21b



The figure betrayed must be supremely eminent in order that so appalling a punishment should await his betrayer.

26. 64 "Hereafter you will see the Son of man seated at the right hand of Power and coming in the clouds of heaven."

Mk. 14. 4  
Lk. 22. 69

The similarity to Dan. 7. 13 is striking. Only Vermes' exposition of the word "like" (see above, p. 240 ) prevents us from contending that the Son of Man in Daniel and therefore here also must be a messianic figure. It cannot be denied that the Messiah is being spoken of in this verse, but it can be denied that the Son of Man is, per se, messianic.

On the clouds, see 24. 30b and Vermes' pertinent remarks on "the Cloud-Man", mentioned above (p. 243 ).

CONCLUSION of this analysis: 13. 37, 41; 16. 27b; 19. 28; 24. 30a; 25. 31 are crucial to the theme of judgement in Matthew as they are without parallel in the other synoptics. However, only 25. 31 is specific as to the possible criteria of judgement; 16. 27b names good works but this is a general term. What has become plain is that the figure described as the Son of Man is by Matthew so often associated with judgement.

According to E. Schürer<sup>1</sup> the contemporary Jewish authorities did not believe that the Messiah would be divine. All the more surprising then that Matthew swam, as it were, against the prevailing current. Though exalted this Son of Man is also able to identify with sufferers as we shall see in the list of Son of Man sayings connected with suffering, but also in 25. 40, 45, for though the title king has intervened the person is the same. The ability to identify with the humblest of men and to share in their suffering are proofs of supreme power.

13. 41 is concerned with the bearing of good or bad fruit. The parable from which it comes is a case in which those who bear good grain cannot take the credit as the grain is the result of prior sowing. We would need to borrow the concept of receptivity from the parable of the four soils in order to infuse some human response into the parable under discussion and the latter parable does not carry the term Son of Man at all.

The category of authority is the main one submitted because it embraces all the sayings that are directly connected with the theme of judgement. In the belief that the Cross is a judgement, a list of the texts referring to the Son of Man's suffering is included.

1 Op. cit., Div. 2, Vol. 2, p. 160.

Son of Man Sayings in Matthew - Sufferings and Predictions of it

8. 20b "...the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head".

Lk. 9. 58 (Q)  
same context

12. 40 "As Jonah ... so will the Son of man be three days ... in the heart of the earth."

17. 12 The context is after the execution of John the Baptist. As Elijah (John the Baptist), "so also shall the Son of man suffer at their hands". Mark does not compare the sufferings of the Baptist with those of the Son of Man. Despite the contexts of supreme exaltation that we have just noted, Matthew does not shrink from this comparison, though of course stooping to John the Baptist, the greatest man so far born (11. 11) is not stooping low.

Mk. 9. 12

17. 22, 23 "The Son of man will be delivered up into the hands of men and they will kill him, and the third day he will be raised up".

Mk. 9. 31

The Marcan parallel has "is delivered" and "he will rise again" instead of "will be raised". Lucan parallel (not Q) has only the first clause, which is the same as Matthew.

(The tendency to replace Mark's ἀναστῆσεται here and in 16. 21; 17. 9; 20. 19, by ἐγερθήσεται is striking, the former being a Semitism,

the latter a Graecism. See J. Jeremias, N.T. Theol., Vol. 1, p. 277.)

(Matthew's passive may also indicate a heightening of the divinity of the Son of Man, as the passive is often a periphrasis for the action of God.)

20. 18, 19 "The Son of man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death, and deliver him to the Gentiles to be mocked and scourged and crucified, and he will be raised on the third day".

Mk. 10. 33, 34  
Lk. 18. 32, 33

Matthew omits Mark's reference to spitting. Luke omits from "chief priests" to "death".

20. 28 "The Son of man came ... to serve and to give his life a ransom for many".

Mk. 10. 45

26. 2 "The Son of man will be delivered up to be crucified".

No parallel

26. 24 "The Son of man goes as it is written of him".

Mk. 14. 21  
(Lk. 22. 22)

26. 45 "The Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners".

Mk. 14. 41

We may note that the phrase Son of Man is used less than half as often in reference to suffering as in reference to authority. This is additional evidence of the meaning Matthew attached to it. In two of the passion predictions shared with Mark, Matthew also notes the Resurrection and in 12. 40, as we have seen, it is implied by the context in Matthew and in Jonah.

APPENDIX EThe Meaning of "the Least".

One of the most telling cases made against the view that the least are the humblest Christian missionaries is put by E. Schweizer. He first gives a résumé of the above view. He is one of the few commentators who refer to 2 Tim. 1.16-17 and he generalizes from this instance:

"those imprisoned for their preaching are visited by the newly converted members of the community".<sup>1</sup>

We may venture to doubt whether this generalization is completely justified, as, despite Paul's description of himself in Eph. 4.8, 'visiting so eminent an apostle would obviously be an attraction for a disciple. Schweizer couples his thought with a reference to the tribulations listed in 2 Cor. 11.23, 27, 30 which we have already considered. Men's reaction, in this case to the preaching of these messengers (in 25.31-46), would be, he proceeds: "the criterion for vindication or condemnation at the judgement. This interpretation is quite possible."<sup>1a</sup> Then he continues:

"Against it one may say that Matthew as well as Mk. 9.42 and Lk. 17.2 always uses the phrase 'these little ones' for the disciples, never any variant; why then would he use another expression here?"

We find an answer in Légasse who writes of the expression below:

"Celle-ci désignant les chrétiens sans distinction, il était requis de la préciser autrement que par un simple positif, car ἐνὶ τούτων τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν μικρῶν incluait apparemment toute l'Eglise dans la classe de petits."<sup>2</sup>

Légasse goes on to note the peculiarity of the concern Matthew has here for material needs. This is inconsistent with his emphasis elsewhere e.g. in 5.3 where he adds "in spirit" to Luke's beatitude (Lk. 6.20). In

1 Op.cit., p.478.

1a Loc.cit., p.479.

2 Op.cit., p.96.

6.1-4 Légasse rightly points out in effect, that the main thrust is a warning against ostentation, but he fails to note that the practice of almsgiving is assumed, so the case is not as strong as he makes it. However, it is true that Matthew is less interested in material help than Luke and the presence of this interest here in Mt.25.31-46 suggests that Matthew has something special in mind.

In my view, Matthew did not want to talk of the whole church in his final parable of the judgement. He wanted to highlight the plight of the least valuable members of Jesus' community, the feebleness of whose character and the insignificance of whose witness made it easy for the nations to ignore them.<sup>1</sup> This is perhaps what Matthew meant in 24.12 when he warned:

"... because wickedness is multiplied most men's love will grow cold."

Matthew possibly wanted to emphasize the extreme humility of the messengers in view of the fact that the world had been, presumably, evangelized. Apostles could not have reached every individual but the lowliest Christian could have. Therefore, if the least are the King's messengers, the only possible criterion for judging all nations would be the nations' reaction to those whom they had had opportunity to meet. So Matthew has to find a word other than *πικροί*, because that was the usual word for disciples without distinction. Here Matthew wishes to make a distinction, namely to specify the least distinguished. Final judgement is then not on the basis of response to eminent ambassadors of the King, for then it could not have been universal nor could meeting such as them be so searching a test as meeting the undistinguished.

1 For the basis of this thought I am indebted to Légasse, loc.cit., p.98, though he evidently thinks that the deficiency of love to which Matthew directs attention was in the church. That may be but I do not think that this is his aim here. It is more likely to be his aim in 24.12, though even there the use of the word "men's" indicates a meaning broader than disciples.

There possibly were grave deficiencies in the treatment of Christians who were inferior owing to the feebleness of their spiritual standing. It is to deficiencies in love to these that Matthew may be directing attention. The remedying of them, at once the crudest and most pressing, would include all the lesser deficiencies in love towards more important Christians.

Schweizer continues:

"Further, in 10.14, Matthew is primarily concerned with the words to be spoken by Jesus' messengers not with the kind of reception they meet, that is the concern of Luke - see 9.4-5; 10.7-12".

The word "primarily" here may be challenged. Matthew does mention disciples' words but he puts disciples' reception first. Even if Schweizer is right about 10.14 this does not necessarily mean that Matthew could not have another primary concern in 25.31-46. We cannot be sure that "the least" were not naked or in prison or stranger owing to their preaching activities, however modest. When Schweizer asserts "that is the concern of Luke" is he not compartmentalizing Luke too much, putting him (and Matthew) in a strait-jacket? The exhortation not to be anxious about what to say after arrest in Mt. 10.19 has a parallel in Luke (12.11) so that Luke cannot be devoid of interest in words. Should Matthew be considered uninterested in the reception of disciples simply because he mentions words in 10.14?

It is ironic that Schweizer himself should have brought to notice a passage from the Apocalypse of Peter (Nag Hammadi Codex V11/3 p.79, 19-30), which, he says:

"is the first direct witness to a church typically Matthaean. It is the church of "the little ones" fighting against those who "let themselves be called bishop and also deacon as if they had received authority from God, who recline at table after the law of places of honour. Cf. Mt. 23.6-10; 18.10."<sup>1</sup>

This quotation was used by Schweizer in connexion with asceticism in reference to Mt. 7.13-23, but it may be applied to the question of the

1 Op. cit., p.184.

least in the sense that if the whole church consists of little ones, barring the self-styled bishops and deacons, then how is one to express a peculiarly deprived group among these little ones except by a comparative or a superlative? At the same time in 10.40-42 the little ones are identified with prophets and righteous men and they were unlikely to be ignored by those who had been evangelized.

Schweizer continues:

"Above all, would Matthew have taken the acts of charity crucial for the judgement and confined them to those done for disciples - after having, in the commandment to love one's enemies, specifically condemned such distinctions (5: 43-48)? Elitism is the possible meaning here; but more likely Matthew construes the words of the judge in a broader sense".

In answer to this charge of elitism may Matthew not be universalist in one passage, 5.43-48 (and possibly in 6.1-4 where the recipients of alms are not designated) and elitist in another? If we are correct in understanding the least to be the feeblest of Jesus' disciples and if the missionary situation of 24.14 is assumed - a prophecy of total evangelization - then may Matthew not be writing with the survival of the least distinguished emissaries in mind? How is the promise of 6.33 to be fulfilled if no one is kind to those who seek first the Kingdom? Moreover, if the situation is one of diminishing love within the church, may Matthew not be tackling the problem where it first manifests itself, namely among the least conspicuous disciples, for the eminent would probably not be the first to feel the effects of the lessening of deeds of practical love? One might suppose that true elitism would single out the most important disciples and plead for special care to be accorded to them.

The poorest disciple may well be reckoned to be materially worse off than the poorest unbelievers. Their sufferings are to some extent voluntary and in large measure a result of their faith. Had they chosen a quiet, unenterprising life minding their own business they might not



have been strangers or imprisoned and would have been less likely to have been hungry etc.

John has a primarily evangelical motive in writing: "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13.35). Might Matthew not have the same aim in 25.31-46?

Our conclusion of this discussion is then: Matthew's first intent is to focus attention on the humblest agents of the Son of Man, the inconspicuous servants of the King. This is a salutary corrective to vague, diffusive, ineffective benignity. Love directed in the first instance at other members of the community will be a great witness to the world and will therefore spread universally.

Salt is for the earth and light for the world (5.13f.). The love and devotion lavished on fellow-believers is too great and incalculable a quality to fail to overflow to everyone.

On the basis of the evidence I am inclined to agree with Michaels when he makes the conciliatory statement: "There is universalism here but it comes to expression only indirectly."<sup>1</sup>

1 Op.cit., p.37.

The Meaning of "Brethren".

The quotation from T.W.Manson (see p.265 above) saying that a brother shares a common faith, i.e. not necessarily the Israelite faith, merits elaboration. In Genesis 49.5, Jacob points out that Simeon and Levi are brethren and he must mean in cruelty, anger and self-will. It would have been pointless to have used brother in the sense of blood-brother as all his twelve sons were brothers, but there was a point in applying the term abim specifically to these two. He certainly did not mean brothers in the sense of fellow Israelites as he himself was the first Israelite and he prays to be dissociated from them, "O my soul come not into their council; O my spirit be not joined to their company" (Gen. 49.6). They were brothers in evil.

In Proverbs (18.9), there occurs another example of the use of brother which cannot have any connexion with Israelite faith, but it does still connote a spiritual fraternity, however undesirable: "he who is slack in his work is brother to him who destroys".

There are occasions when brother is ambivalent, e.g. Jer. 39.9 and Obad. 10,12. In the first, Jew and brother are in apposition and it is not clear whether the meaning is Jew by race or by religion. The context of the last two references is one in which Edom (Esau) is explicitly said to be heathen, yet the blood relation of many generations before is spoken of as if it still obtained for the descendants.

There are other occasions when brother is used more loosely than T.W.Manson's definition might lead us to expect, e.g. Jer. 9.4,

"Let everyone beware of his neighbour  
And trust not any brother  
for every brother is a supplanter  
and every neighbour goes about as a slanderer".

Here the distinction between brother and neighbour is blurred. They appear to be almost synonymous, because closely parallel (and this is typical of the most common form of Semitic poetry). Moreover, in so far as a brother is untrustworthy he is not a true fellow-believer and his connexion mainly external. Ezek. 18.18 depicts an idolator who robs his brother. The state of his brother's faith is unclear but probably to be distinguished from his own lack of faith.

But Manson did not claim an absolute distinction between brother and neighbour, only that certain different notions were uppermost in each case, so these examples cannot negate but only modify the validity of his saying.

An awareness of the Jewish background is particularly important in this instance for the Sermon on the Mount presents a stage of transition at any rate in thought between Jewish and Christian concepts e.g. the altar is mentioned as if in use yet the Gospel was written some 25 years after the destruction of the Temple and therefore of the altar. David Hill<sup>1</sup> expresses the matter well when he writes:

"The Jewish Christianity evidenced by the Gospel is a Christianity which has just severed connexion with the Jewish communities, but which expresses itself in forms and categories borrowed from Judaism."

What Hill says applies to the saying about being reconciled to your brother, 5.22 and possibly to 7.2ff. and 18.15ff.

James Moffatt,<sup>2</sup> Love in the New Testament demonstrates that brother generally means fellow-Christian. In Paul's writings a locus classicus

1 Op.cit., p.31.

2 London, 1929, e.g. p.285. "The real brothers are those who are regenerated not merely generated." Or, p.50: "'Dearly beloved brethren' ... in the primitive churches originally represented the real greeting of those who were glad to meet as members of the one household of faith."

for the N.T. use of brother might be found in 1 Cor. 5.9-11.

J.B. Phillips paraphrases it in order to bring out the meaning of brother. Paul commands, "not to ~~dis~~associate with all men who are fornicators, covetous, idolators ... for then you would need to go out of the world altogether! Only from a brother, a professing Christian, who is so described, are you to part company."

The word brother occurs thirty-six times in Matthew. Twenty of these obviously mean blood brother 1.2,11; 4.18 twice; 4.21 twice; 10.2 twice; 10.21; 12.46,47; 13.55; 14.3; 17.1; 19.29; 20.24; 22.24 twice; 22.25 twice. Sixteen remain and they are equally obviously something different. Only twice is there any apparent doubt that what we quoted" (p.265, above) from T.W. Manson and Ingelaere might be unfounded: 5.47 and 23.8. In 5.47 Gentiles are said to salute their brethren. This does not deny to the word brother the meaning, member of a religious community, but merely denies to it the meaning, member of the Jewish or of Jesus' community. What other word could have been used to indicate a fellow-Gentile? They did after all practise religion, however mistaken that religion. It is just possible that here the word means blood-brother in which case no problem arises.

The other example which seems to introduce a doubt is 23.8, "you all are brethren". Referring to 23.1, we find that "you" includes crowds as well as disciples. Among the crowds were Jews and proselytes, but also no doubt some Gentiles though not perhaps as many Gentiles as in a Galilaean audience. Almost certainly there would be a number of Roman soldiers. The point about the trick question regarding paying tax to Caesar in the previous chapter would have been much less strong had no Romans been present to hear first hand the damning evidence out of Jesus' own mouth. Among the disciples was Judas, not a true believer. We may answer this doubt

as to the meaning of brethren here by observing that these brethren owe allegiance to one teacher. Insofar as they obey that one teacher, are they really brethren? ... "One is your master even Christ and you all are brethren". Otherwise the word can only be used in a potential sense. It is significant that brethren are not immediately associated with one Father. It would have been more natural. It might have opened the door to a naturalistic interpretation except that Matthew is at some pains to show elsewhere that only true disciples (here those with one teacher) are children of their Father in heaven. In 5.9,45 it is the peace-makers who shall be called sons of God and those who love their enemies and pray for their persecutors who become the sons of their Father in heaven. J. Jeremias<sup>1</sup> notes that the Lord's prayer beginning, in Matthew's version, "Our Father", was jealously fenced by the early church, "it was reserved for full members and it was not disclosed to those who stood outside". In view of what we have seen of Matthew this is in line with his thinking and may have reflected it. (For further reference on this see the section on 6.14,15, above, page 114).

Thus, if the word Father was not taken by Matthew in the loose sense of universal Creator, it is not surprising that he uses brother in a restricted sense also. Matthew associates the unity of the brotherhood not so much with the Fatherhood of God, possibly because in this context it might have been open to misunderstanding in a lax sense, but with the acceptance of one teacher, i.e. a common discipline. This is specially striking in view of the fact that in the very next sentence he mentions "one Father" not as a ground for saying "you are all brothers", but as a reason for not calling anyone on earth "father".

1 The Prayers of Jesus, op. cit., p.85.

Among the other references to brother in a spiritual sense there are two loci classici: 12.50 and 28.10. 12.50 introduces a sharp distinction between blood brotherhood and common spiritual bond - "whoever" (in contrast to the merely physical brothers who were waiting to speak to Him (vv. 46-49)) "does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother". Here Matthew's typical emphasis on obedience becomes the sole criterion of brotherhood. Matthew inserts a gesture absent from Mark in 12.49a; "Stretching out his hand towards his disciples he said ..." whereas Mark records; "Looking around on those who sat about him, he said ...". Those who sat about him are, in v.32, described as the crowd. In 28.10 we learn that brothers are equivalent to disciples. We also learn that they are peculiarly close to the Risen Christ, for it is unthinkable that he should rise from the dead and fail to meet them. We may well believe that a sentimental value in the Galilaeen rendez-vous on the new Sabbath, the first Lord's Day, gives new depth to the meaning of brethren - "Go and tell my brethren that I go before you into Galilee". On occasions when the atmosphere is super-charged, as at the Resurrection, words like brother are likely to mean much.

Regarding 7.3ff., light may be thrown on the meaning of brother by Goulder's original interpretation of 7.6. If Goulder were correct he would confirm the narrow interpretation of brother we have adopted. Since this is so important not only to the definition of brother but to the criteria of judgement we may take leave to quote Goulder.<sup>1</sup> First he expounds 7.1-6, (this begs the question as to whether v.6 is closely associated with vv.1-5):

..."the criticism you deal out to your neighbour is the criticism you will receive from God..."

here presumably he is dealing with verse 1 where brother is not

1 Op. cit., p.265f.

mentioned. With no specified object the command is rightly applied to neighbour.

"Why criticize your fellow-Christians' peccadilloes when your own sins are as scarlet?"

Here he is talking about vv. 2-5 where brother is mentioned.

"Go humbly, mourn ..."

Then he summarizes the six verses:

"(a) don't criticize (in your heart); (b) don't criticize your brother to his face; (c) don't criticize your brother behind his back. Don't give the sacrifice to the dogs, don't throw your pearls to the pigs, don't expose what is precious, your brother's character, to the malice of the godless: otherwise they will trample them underfoot, they will join happily enough in your backbiting and then turn and rend you and serve your right. In this third precept, Matthew follows a popular rabbinic theme going back to the talebearer of Proverbs.<sup>1</sup> The Tannaite R. Eliezer said, 'Let the honour of thy brother be as dear to thee as thy own'.<sup>2</sup> Backbiting was called the evil tongue (lashon hara) or in Aramaic the third tongue (lisan telita'e). Matthew is close to the thought of ben Sirach, 'Blame not before thou has examined ... and where sinners judge, sit not thou with them.'<sup>3</sup> - first don't be quick to criticize, second don't criticize in company with the malicious. This is the most difficult text in the Gospel on any account, and this solution seems to me by far the most satisfactory."

This has the obvious advantage of tying up v.6 with vv.1-5 but while it is appealing, it is not completely cogent. Only one rabbinic reference is given, though Goulder claims there are many more, to the effect that a brother's honour is dear. He admits that nowhere in the N.T. is a brother compared to a pearl. His best arguments are the preciousness implicit in the lost sheep (Mt. 18.12ff.) and the fact that Paul calls his converts an offering (προσφορά). It is hard to see what support the "evil tongue" and the "third tongue" lend to his

1 (G.F.Moore devotes half a chapter to it - Judaism, Pt.V, ch.V.).

2 (M.Aboth 2.10).

3 (Ecclus. 11.7-9).

case, for no necessary connexion is evident between backbiting and giving holy things to dogs or casting pearls before swine. In sum we have to assess his case as attractive, but not proven.

The best clue to the interpretation of 7.6 may be that the Didache, chapter 9, applies the first part of the verse to the Eucharist excluding from it all who have not been baptized in the name of the Lord.

The only other reference to pearl in the N.T. apart from the Book of Revelation is Mt. 13.45f., where it is associated with the Kingdom of heaven. There is an interpretation of this which makes Jesus the merchant and the pearl the church (see Trench, *op.cit.*, p.291). However, the usual understanding is that a man seeking God is the merchant and the main point is his earnestness. This has advantages, two of which are that selling all that he had is similar in phraseology and in thought to Mt. 19.21, and buying the pearl is akin to buying oil, 25.9. It is probable, therefore, that 7.6 is to be understood on the lines indicated by the Didache rather than as Goulder sees it.

The Mekilta has the significant but slightly heterodox thought that God is a brother. It quotes: "And a brother is born for adversity" Prov. 17.17.<sup>1</sup> The interpretation given is: "I (God) am like a brother to Israel when they are in trouble" (Mek. 1.221 Tr. Besh. 4.66ff.). From Ps. 122.8, it is argued that brother is a designation for Israel (*loc. cit.*, 68f.). If God is like a brother it follows that Jesus is also, Mt. 3.7; 11.27; 17.5.

The Gospel of Thomas 99 has a parallel with Mt. 12.46-50; Mk. 3.31-35; Lk. 8.19-21. This tends to confirm that the spiritual

1 This text is comparable to Is. 63.9 in the rendering given by A.V. which may be unsound as a translation but is theologically sound: "In all their (his people's) affliction, he (God) was afflicted".



concept of brotherhood in the Christian community was well-established.

It may be claimed that the concept of identification between God, Jesus and disciples is established, though, as it relates to God, the Father-son relation is the norm 5.9, 48, not brother-brother. The latter is present indirectly however in 11.27. Those who know the Son know the Father. Those who know the Son have had the meaning of his mighty works revealed to them - works of mercy and by learning from him (including learning to do these works) they find rest (11.29).

The connexion between God as fellow-sufferer with men and Christ as such is well made by Studdert Kennedy:

"Father, if He, the Christ, were Thy revealer,  
Truly the first begotten of the Lord,  
Then must Thou be a Sufferer and a Healer,  
Pierced to the heart by the sorrow of the sword.

Then must it mean, not only that thy sorrow  
Smote Thee that once upon the lonely Tree.  
But that today tonight and on the morrow  
Still it will come, O Gallant God to Thee!"<sup>1</sup>

This also brings out the concept of continuing suffering by God, as in Mt. 25.31-46, Jesus has evidently been suffering throughout history.

1 G.A.Studdert Kennedy "The Suffering God", The Unutterable Beauty, London, 1964 (first published 1927), p.12f.

APPENDIX GCharity.

Matthew's assumption that alms will be given by disciples - "when you give alms" (6.2) (not "if...") - could only have been made against a background of abundant commands and exhortations to charity such as, at that time, was found in Judaism. G.F.Moore summarizes his extensive study of Judaism in this respect: "Solicitude for the poor is broadly impressed on the biblical legislation."<sup>1</sup>

Maimonides gives an impression of its importance:

"... we are commanded to give charity (to the poor) to support their needs and to ease their lot. This Commandment is expressed in various ways in Scripture, as 'Thou shalt surely open thy hand unto thy poor and needy brother,' (Deut.XV,11) and again, 'And if thy brother be waxen poor ... then thou shalt uphold him,' (Lev. XXV, 35) and yet again, 'That thy brother may live with thee,' (ibid.v,36). The meaning of all these expressions is the same, namely, that we are to help our poor and support them according to their needs.

The provisions of this Commandment are explained in various places, most of them in Kethuboth and Baba Bathra.

According to Tradition, even a poor man who lives on charity is under obligation to observe this Commandment; that is to say, he must give charity, however small in amount, to one who is poorer than himself, or as poor as himself.

NOTE: We are under obligation to be more heedful in the fulfilment of the Commandment to distribute charity than in that of any other Positive Commandment, since charity is the distinguishing mark of righteousness in the seed of Abraham, our father, as it is said, 'For I have known him, to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice' (Gen. XVIII, 19). The position of Israel will not become established, nor will the true faith prove enduring, save through charity, as it is said, 'In righteousness shalt thou be established' (Isa. LIV. 14). Further, Israel will not be redeemed save only through charity, as it is said, 'Zion shall be redeemed with justice, and they that return of her with righteousness' (ibid., I, 27; Mishneh Torah, Zeraim, Hilchoth Matnoth Anim, X, 1)".<sup>2</sup>

It is not only in legislation, however, that Judaism emphasizes charity but in exhortations and not least in statements about God's concern for the poor, so, consequently, a righteous man is similarly concerned.

1 Judaism, 2.162.

2 The Commandments, 1. p.208, No.195.

From these last two it is but a short step to the inference that every Israelite, every Jew should do and be likewise. The abundance of such references to the poor is most impressive.<sup>1</sup> The sheer weight of numbers is not the only factor. The thoughtfulness required by the Torah and by rabbinic teaching is striking. The law in Lev. 19.10 about not completely gleaning a field but leaving some deliberately for the poor is one example; likewise, the forgotten sheaf (Deut. 24.18) and the fallen grapes (Lev. 19.10).

Maimonides confirms this: "The best charity is that done in secret (B.B. 9b); it is related in the Mishnah that in the Temple there was a chamber called the 'Chamber of the Silent', where the rich placed their alms and the poor received them, in ignorance of each other's identity (Shek. V. 6)."<sup>2</sup>

The rabbis showed a great understanding of human nature. Regard must be had for the self-respect of the recipient: "Greater is he who lends than he who gives and greater than all is he who, by lending helps a poor man to help himself."<sup>3</sup>

The Sifre says: "Be careful not to refuse charity for everyone that refuses charity is put in the same category as idolators and he breaks off from him the yoke of heaven."<sup>4</sup> This shows that a sin of omission is taken seriously as it is in 25.31-46.

1 Ex. 22.25; 23.3,6,11; Lev. 14.21; 19.10,15; 23.22; 25.25,35-41, 47ff.; Deut. 15.7ff.; 24.12ff.; 1 Sam. 2.8; 2 Sam. 12.1-4; Job. 5. 15,16; 20.10,19; 24.4,9,14; 29.12,16; 30.25; 31.16,19; 34.19,28; 36.6,15; Ps. 9.18; 10.2,8,9,10,14; 12.5; 14.6; 34.6; 35.10; 37.14; 40.17; 41.1; 68.10; 69.33; 70.5; 72.2,4,12,13; 74.19,21; 82.3,4; 86.1; 109.16,22,31; 112.9; 132.15; 140.12; Prov. 10.15; 14.21,31; 17.5; 18.23; 19.17; 21.13; 22.9,16,22; 28.3,8,15,27; 29.7,14; 14.30,32; 25.4; 26.6; 29.19; 32.7; 41.17; 58.7; 66.2; Jer. 2.34; 20.13; 22.16; Ezek. 16.49; 18.12; 22.29; Dan. 4.27; Amos. 2.6,7; 4.1; 5.11,12; 8.4,6; Hab. 3.14; Zech. 7.10.

All these references from Jeremiah onwards are associated with judgement (probably final, see p.87f., above) except Dan. 7.27. Amongst the others Ps.9.18 is closely associated with judgement (v.17).

2 The Commandments. 1, p.209, No.195.

3 Shab. 63a, quoted by Maimonides, op cit., 1, p.211, No.197.

4 Sifre Deut. 15.8, 116-118 (ed. Friedmann f. 98a-b) quoted by S.Schechter, op. cit., pp. 231f.

Moore writes:

"From the phrase 'Thou shalt give to him' (Deut. 15.10) it is deduced that a gift to the poor must be made privately with no one else present. For the purpose of sparing the feelings of members of good families there was a special chamber in the temple of Jerusalem where charity was both collected and disbursed in private."<sup>1</sup>

The emphasis on privacy is similar to Matthew (6.3).

The following quotation from Maimonides sums up much of the Jewish legislation on charity. The first paragraph of the quotation has a reference to the ransom of captives. This is not in itself relevant to Matthew who expected prisoners to be visited (25.31-46) not captives to be ransomed. However, it is relevant in that hunger, thirst and nakedness are important as they are to Matthew (10.41; 25.31-46).

"The obligation to effect the ransom of captives, which devolves upon Israel as a whole no less than upon any individual Israelite, is of the essence of the Commandment pertaining to charity: 'The obligation to effect the ransom of captives is prior to that of supporting and clothing the poor. Indeed, no Commandment, be it ever so important, can compare with that relating to the ransom of captives, since the captive is in the category both of them that suffer hunger, thirst, and nakedness, and of them that are ever in mortal danger. Hence one who is wilfully slack in assisting in the ransom of a captive becomes liable forthwith for the transgression of the Scriptural Commandments, 'Thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor shut thy hand from thy needy brother' (Deut. XV, 7; see Neg. Comm. 232); 'Neither shalt thou stand idly by the blood of thy neighbour' (Lev. XIX, 16; see Neg. Comm. 297); and 'He<sup>2</sup> shall not rule with rigour over him in thy sight' (ibid., XXV, 35;<sup>3</sup> see Neg. Comm. 260), as well as for his failure to fulfil the Scriptural Commandments, 'But thou shalt surely open thy hand unto him (Deut. XV, 8); 'That thy brother may live with thee' (Lev. XXV, 36); 'But them that are drawn unto death' (Prov. XXIV, 11) - besides many other similar Commandments. Truly, no Commandment, be it ever so important, can compare with that relating to the ransom of captives' (Mishneth [sic] Torah, Zeraim, Hilchoth Matnoth Anim VIII, 10).

Over and above the obligation devolving upon the individual Israelite to give charity, the community as a whole is enjoined by Jewish law to provide for its poor. [Maimonides exclaims in passing]

Never have we either seen or heard of a community in Israel that should be without its Public Charity Fund (ibid., IX. 3). Charity in the opinion of the Sages, should also be of such a nature as to elevate the spirit of the recipient, besides supplying his mere bodily necessities (ibid., X, 4-5). A Talmudic story relates that a Sage once met the Prophet Elijah in the market-place, and, pointing to the crowds assembled there,

1 Moore, op. cit., 2.167.

2 'He' is the purchaser of an Israelite slave.

3 This reference should be XXV.53.

inquired of the prophet which of them was to be foremost in the world to come. The prophet thereupon singled out two performing jesters, who practised their art with the object of cheering all men who were stricken by grief. (Taan. 22a)!<sup>1</sup>

In the last paragraph we observe the note of joy. While Matthew does not emphasize joy as much as Luke or John he shares with Luke the idea that it is a marked feature of Jesus' ministry (11.17 par. Lk. 7.32). 25.1-13 is peculiar to him and though the chief point of the parable is not the joy of the wedding feast that aspect can hardly be absent. Jesus' post-Resurrection greeting, "Hail!", *Χαίρετε* (28.9) is peculiar to Matthew and this can hardly be of no significance. Into the criteria of judgement may then enter a refusal to accept joy and the choice of other pleasures.

Matthew's emphasis on charity is widely reflected in rabbinic Judaism, "more efficacious than any of the sacrifices" (Succah 29b).<sup>2</sup>

Maimonides quotes: "Charity can even bring about the rescindment of a final Heavenly sentence accompanied by an oath (RH 18a)."<sup>3</sup>

The Jewishness of Matthew's use of *δικαιοσύνη* in 6.1 is well brought out by McNeile who writes: "The externality of Jewish 'righteousness' is expressed by the verb *ποιεῖν* and the high place which almsgiving occupied in it is illustrated by the variants *ἐλεηροσύνην* and *δοῦν* ... The LXX (including Sir.) has *ἐλεηροσύνη* 17 times and *ἐλεος* thrice, for *לְרַחֵם* or *רָחַם* ..." <sup>4</sup>

Ber. 5.3 and Meg. 4.9 note incidentally: "To a bird's nest do thy mercies extend?" (Deut. 22.7).<sup>5</sup> Both Mt. 6.26 and Lk. 12.24 note God's

1 Op. cit., 2.167.

2 Quoted by Abrahams, op. cit., p.117.

3 Op. cit., 2. p.221, No. 232.

4 Op. cit., ad loc.

5 Danby, pp. 6,207 respectively.

concern for birds. This shows that "Q" has a strongly Jewish flavour because the heathen world was not noted for its kindness to living creatures, especially wild ones. Mt. 8.20 (par. Lk. 9.58) imply that God cares for birds' nests and that the Son of man has foregone this security accorded to birds. In Prov. 12.10 we read: "A righteous man regards the life of his beast". This refers to a domestic or farm animal. Matthew (12.11) notices man's mercy towards sheep even on the sabbath (self-interested mercy?). Luke observes in different contexts the same attitude towards an ox or an ass Lk. 13.15; 14.5. Manson<sup>1</sup> is in doubt whether these should be assigned to Q or L. If L they might reflect Luke's interest, as a physician, in bodily needs, in addition to his sympathy with merciful practices in Judaism. From the evidence accumulated incidentally on Luke it may well be that he had been a Jewish proselyte, though his Jewishness is not comparable to that of Matthew.

Kindness to strangers (cf. 25.35,38,43,44) is highlighted by Lev. 19.34 which gives the command: "... you shall love him (the stranger) as yourself", cf. Deut. 10.19 where 'as yourself' is not stated but almost implied. There is a great number of references to the stranger and the kindness and hospitality that should be offered to him even if he is a slave (Ex. 12.19) or "any stranger" (Lev. 17.12). He should not be vexed (Ex. 22.21) nor oppressed (Ex. 23.9). One reason is that the Israelites were strangers in the land of Egypt (ibid., cf. Deut. 10.19; 23.7). Here we have a hint of the identification between the Son of Man and the stranger in 25.35,38,43,44. Other references are: Lev. 16.29; 17.12,15; 18.26; 19.10,33,34; 23.22; 25.6; Num. 9.14; 15.14,26,29,30, etc. A further reason why the stranger should be loved is that God loves him and gives him food and clothing (Deut. 10.18).

1 Sayings, p.27.

Specially important for a study of Matthew among the remaining references that could be given - which are many - are the following: Ruth keenly feels the fact that she is a stranger (2.10). Moreover, no Moabite (and she was one) could enter the assembly of the Lord even to the tenth generation (Deut. 23.2). Yet we find her in Matthew's genealogy of Jesus (1.5).

If the people refrain from oppressing the aliens as well as the fatherless and widows, from shedding innocent blood and from idolatry, (note the prohibitions put in the same class) then God will let them remain in Judah but a threat of judgement soon follows (Jer. 7.6f., 12ff.). In Jer. 22.3f. several of the same prohibitions are repeated and include: "do no violence to the alien". They are followed by a promise for compliance and then a fearful threat for non-compliance (vv. 6ff.). Ezek. 22.7: "... the sojourner suffers extortion in your midst, the fatherless and widow are wronged in you ..." is followed by dire threats (vv. 13ff.). In vv. 29-31 we see the same pattern. Zech. 7.10 reads: "Do not oppress the widow, the fatherless, the sojourner or the poor; and let none of you devise evil against his brother in his heart." Here another element, evil thought, is put alongside the prohibition relating to the sojourner and the same pattern is found as in Ezekiel, insofar as judgement follows stubborn disobedience (vv. 11ff.). In Mal. 3.3,5 God's judgement is first announced and then the sins described against which the judgement is to be directed: sorcery, adultery, false swearing, oppression of the hireling, the widow, the orphan, the thrusting aside of the sojourner, and the failure to fear God. Here the sin against the stranger may not seem to be as serious as oppression yet it keeps bad company indeed.

On wrongdoing, one law is to apply to stranger and native alike, Lev. 24.16,22. In Lev. 25.35 a poor brother is to be treated as a stranger or sojourner. For the assembly also, one law applied (Num.15.15,16,26,29,30; 19.10, for the ritual of the red heifer). Cities of refuge were available

alike to the stranger as to the native (Num. 35.15). The stranger is included in the commandment to rest on the sabbath day (Ex. 20.10; Deut. 5.14). Solomon prays that the petitions of the stranger will be answered (1 Kings 8.41-43). The alien is to be assigned an inheritance in whatever tribe he resides (Ezek. 47.23). With this we may contrast: "Alien is alien, foreigner is indeed foreigner" (W.G.Lambert, Babylonian Wisdom Literature, Oxford, 1960, p.271).

The only one modification of these injunctions to be kind to strangers is as follows: they must not partake of the passover (Ex. 12.45); nor eat of a holy thing (Lev. 22.10). We might be tempted to make a straight comparison with 7.6 on "holy things", but there is a dearth of evidence that "dogs" and "swine" mean Gentiles in the O.T.

No foreigner may enter the sanctuary (Ezek. 44.9). A foreigner can be charged interest on a loan (Deut. 23.20). This is understandable as he was more likely to move away than a native.

Matthew does not mention lending as does Luke (6.34,35; 11.5) but in 6.2 he makes it clear that charity in general is obligatory. It is the obligatoriness rather than the form of charity that provides a connexion with the Mekilta. On Ex. 22.24 "if thou lend money to any of My people ..." it says that this is shown to be obligatory from Deut. 15.8: "Thou shalt surely lend him". (Mek. 2.147, Tr. Bah. 11.59).

The Zadokite Fragment (18.1) reads:

"The wages of two days every month is the rule ... (from)  
it they shall strengthen the hands of the poor and needy."<sup>1</sup>

Jeremias (PJ, p.207) quotes Mid. Tan. 15.9 where God says to Israel: "My children when you gave food to the poor, I counted it as though you had given it to me." In Is. 58.8 God is present when acts of charity are done, though it is not clear whether he is at one with the givers

<sup>1</sup> "Fragments of a Zadokite Work", ed. R.H.Charles, op.cit., (Pseudepigrapha), Vol.2, p.832, dated probably between 18 B.C. and 8 B.C. (loc.cit., p.788).



or receivers or both. In Is. 58.7 the hungry and naked are identical with two of the classes in Mt. 25.35ff. and "the homeless poor," to whom hospitality ought to be given in Isaiah, correspond to some extent with the taking in of strangers.

I allow Maimonides to have the last word in this appendix as he has drawn attention to so many valuable connexions of thought made by the rabbis. These give an insight into the enormous importance they attached to charity and lack of it. The word "base" is one of these. First a base thought is observed to be associated with an evil (niggardly) eye in Deut. 15.9. Later, "base" is the link between those who refuse charity and idolaters (Deut. 13.14; 15.9). Charity is also connected with righteousness in typically Jewish fashion (cf. Mt. 6.1-4 already noted in regard to the Pirke Aboth).

The saying: "No one is ever impoverished by charity" has a counterpart in Mt. 6.33, "... seek first his (the Father's) kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things (food and clothing) shall be yours as well". A better text than Is. 32.17 to have undergirded the above rabbinic saying would have been Ps. 37.25: "I have been young and now am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his children begging bread".

Deut. 13.18 is close to Matthew's beatitude: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" (5.7). Cruelty and lack of mercy makes a man of questionable lineage" for which Jer. 50.42 is cited in support. The converse of Mt. 5.7 in 6.14,15 and the parable of the unforgiving debtor (18.23-35, especially vv.32ff.) is comparable with the classification of the cruel and unmerciful as idolaters.

We find here a definition of "brother" which assists us in understanding Mt. 25.31-46.

God is almost identified with the poor. He is "nigh unto their cry" for which Job 34.28 is cited and he has a covenant with them, evidence for

which is seen in Ex. 22.26. A better text from the point of view of Jesus' identification with his brethren in 25.31-46 would have been Is. 58.6-9 (see p.329f.above).

The quotation referred to from Maimonides runs as follows:

"Scripture in this commandment (Ex. 22.24, seen to be obligatory in Deut. 15.8) deals primarily with the alleviation of sheer poverty, the Torah having expressly rebuked him that fails to lend to the poor, as it is said, '[Beware that there be not a base thought in thy heart ...] and thine eye be evil against thy needy brother, and thou give him nought' (Deut. XV, 9; Mishneh Torah, Mishpatim, Hilchoth Malveh Ve-Loveh I, 1). Moreover, he who withholds a loan from the poor in his hour of need becomes culpable in that he transgresses a Negative Commandment (see Neg. Comm. 232) [namely Deut.15.7b '... you shall not harden your heart or shut your hand against your poor brother'] in addition to having neglected to fulfil a Positive Commandment. Thus charitableness to a needy brother is a matter of extreme concern to Jews, affecting as it does the very fundamentals of the faith: 'No one ever becomes impoverished by charity; nor may any evil or loss be occasioned by charity, as it is said, And the work of righteousness shall be peace (Isa. XXXII,17). He who is merciful will draw upon himself mercy from on High, as it is said, And [the Lord] may show thee mercy, and have compassion upon thee, and multiply thee (Deut. XIII, 18); while he who is cruel and shows no mercy, is of questionable lineage, inasmuch as cruelty is a special characteristic of idolaters, as it is said, They are cruel, and have no compassion (Jer. L, 42). All Israel, on the contrary, and the followers of Israel (i.e. the proselytes), are in every sense like brothers, as it is said, Ye are the children of the Lord your God (Deut. XIV, 1). Now if a brother has no mercy upon a brother, where shall mercy ever be found? And where shall the indigent of Israel turn? [Shall they apply themselves] to the idolaters, who despise them, and persecute them without cease? Their only hope rests with their own brothers. He that refuses charity is called base, even as he that worships idols is called base: for concerning him that worships idols it is said, Certain base fellows are gone out from the midst of thee (ibid., XIII, 14), and concerning him that refuses charity it is said, Beware that there be not a base thought in thy heart (ibid., XV. 9); and he is further called wicked, as it is said, But the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel (Prov. XII, 10); and again he is called a sinner, as it is said, And he cry unto the Lord against thee, and it be sin in thee (Deut. XV, 9). The Holy One, blessed be He, is ever nigh unto the cry of the poor, as it is said, 'And he heareth the cry of the afflicted' (Job XXXIV, 28). Hence heed should be taken lest they cry [unto the Lord] - a covenant being established between them [and the Holy One, blessed be He], as it is said, And it shall come to pass, when he crieth unto Me, that I will hear; for I am gracious' (Ex. XXII, 26; Mishneh Torah, Zeraim, Hilchoth Matnoth Aniim X, 2-3)".<sup>1</sup>

APPENDIX HSins of Omission

Sins of omission in other respects than omitting to give alms are also regarded most seriously by the O.T. e.g.: ceasing to pray for the people (1 Sam. 12.23, cf. Mt. 6.6 "when you pray", not "if you pray"), neglecting one's duty (1 Kings 20.40). Perhaps the most startling example is the judgement on Eli, to be punished forever, for not restraining his sons (1 Sam. 4.13f.). All his years of service to God evidently were of no avail in the face of this woeful lack of paternal discipline.

The references to gleaning etc. (above) could also be seen as a warning against sinning by omission, because the natural thing for a thrifty man to do is to reap the corners, pick up the forgotten sheaf and the fallen grapes. We see the same concern about sins of omission in Mt. 25.40-46. It is hard to escape the general issue of mercy and warnings against sins of omission as associated, more or less, with lack of charity. For instance in Mal. 3.8ff. the withholding of tithes and offerings is described as robbing God. Some of these offerings were for the poor. Many of the commandments already noted under charity are admonitions against sins of omission.

A few more illustrations will suffice then to confirm that Matthew shows his Jewishness in his emphasis on sins of omission though he took the emphasis much further and linked them with final judgement (cf. Ob.15,16,18; Mal. 4.1).<sup>1</sup>

Leaving a pit open (Ex. 21.33) and neglecting to restore an enemy's stray ox or ass (Ex. 23.4) are small but significant examples. The latter

1 The judgement referred to in Obadiah and Malachi is probably final as well as temporal, see pp.87f., above. But it does not pertain exclusively to sins of omission, see both prophets, *passim*.

is particularly so because it is an enemy's animal. Whoever coined the command: "hate your enemy" (5.43) must have ignored Ex. 23.4 or contradicted the spirit of it.

Letting the wages of a hired labourer remain with you all night (Lev. 19.13b) and not returning at sundown a garment taken in pledge (Ex. 26.26f.) refer to prohibitions which reveal great consideration for the poor man. The latter is one of the more serious sins because God says of it: "... if he cries to me, I will hear for I am compassionate". (See the last quotation from Maimonides, above p.331). Here we see an implicit threat of judgement and a hint of the King's identification with the hungry etc. in 25.40,42,44,45. If James (5.4) is right the implicit threat of Ex. 22.27 can be added in effect to Lev. 19.13b., thus rendering the latter as serious as the former.

The rabbis placed a high value on labour: "Love labour ..." (Ab. 1.10); "Great is the dignity of labour; it honours man" (Gittin 67a; Ned. 49a); "Beautiful is the intellectual occupation if combined with some practical work" (Ab. 2.2). "He who lives on the toil of his hands is greater than he who lives in idle piety" (Ber. 8a,b.).

Matthew did not so emphasize labour. Jesus, the carpenter (Mk. 6.3) becomes in Matthew the carpenter's son (13.55). Those who only worked one hour (20.9) were, if we dare to draw any conclusion from the literal sense of the parable (20.1-16) rewarded so disproportionately as to make one suppose that Matthew regarded labour as relatively unimportant. On the other hand the last-hired workers were involuntarily idle. In 25.14-30 though the thrust of the parable must be in the use of spiritual gifts, this cannot be dissociated entirely from mundane affairs and ordinary labour.

Matthew does observe that Jesus called fishermen (4.18) and they were not lazy men, but on being called they left their work. An implication

of 6.26ff. is that even if the birds do not store food and the lilies do not work, most people do in fact work, but this is so far from being the message of the passage, that we cannot base a sound argument upon it.

Thus on the face of it we see little direct likeness between Matthew's teaching about work and that of rabbinic Judaism.

However, there is some evidence that Matthew had the numerous warnings about sloth in Proverbs in mind (Prov. 6.6-9; 10.26; 12.24,27; 13.4; 15.19; 18.9; 19.15,24; 20.4; 21.25; 22.13; 24.30; 26.13,14,15,16 cf. the slothful servant in 25.26) and there is a considerable verbal connection in Greek, briefly noted when 25.14-30 was dealt with. Out of fourteen times when the LXX may be translated "slothful", ten times the same Greek word (*δοληρός*) is used as that which Matthew uses in 25.26. This word is particularly relevant to Matthew's usage in the context of fear ("... I was afraid" 25.25). The sluggard cannot go out of doors because there is a lion in the street (Prov. 22.13; 26.13). The same description holds to him who is "brother to him that destroys" (Prov. 18.9) and this may be connected with the point that failure to earn interest (Mt. 25.27) is destructive, in the sense that anything which is not productive is destructive, especially in spiritual affairs (cf. Mt. 12.30 "he who gathers not with me scatters ...").

In Judges 5.23, Meroz is cursed because: "They came not to the help of the Lord". They affected to be neutral. Edom is bitterly rebuked by Obadiah. Edom was in effect not neutral (see Obadiah *passim*) but he "stood aloof" (Ob.11) and so pretended to be neutral. Neutrality for Matthew is impossible (12.30 etc.). Some people might appear to be indifferent as the chief priests and scribes in 2.1-12 for they made no effort further to investigate the remarkable concurrence of the Bethlehem prophecy (Mic. 5.2) and the guidance of the Magi<sup>1</sup> (and possibly the scribal

1 In the arrival of the wise men claiming to have seen "his star" (Mt.2.1,2), Is.60.3a: "And nations shall come to your light" has an obvious fulfilment.

interpretation of the date as given by Daniel, 9.25,26).<sup>1</sup>

Later events proved that these seemingly apathetic men, or their immediate descendants and successors, people of the same outlook, were actively hostile (26.3ff., 57ff., 27.1 passim; 28.11-15).

"...You shall reason with your neighbour lest you bear sin because of him" (Lev. 19.17b) seems to mean that it is a sin not only to hate your brother (17a) but to fail to express a sense of injury and keep silent when you ought to have rebuked him.

Sins of omission are not greatly emphasized in the Mekilta as they are in Matthew but it does underline the sin of not taking back an enemy's ox or ass (3.165 on Ex. 11.30ff.).

Altogether sins of omission are taken seriously by the O.T. and by the rabbis in commenting on the appropriate passages, but seldom do we find (except in the cases noted on p.328 para 1 and n.1) that they are in the context of final judgement. Thus Matthew's concern about them in the context of final judgement in chapter 25 shows that the gravity with which he assesses them far surpasses that of Israelite and Jewish literature.

1 The possibility may be a remote one. However, A. Edersheim, LTJM, 2. 733f. has assembled a quite impressive array of texts in Daniel which were understood messianically by the rabbis. The nearest to 9.25,26 is 9.12 to which he finds a reference in Tal. San. 98a. If the decree of Artaxerxes to restore and rebuild Jerusalem was dated 453 B.C., then it would be strange that 69 weeks of years = 483 years leaves only 30 years short. This 30 years could be accounted for by the fact that Jesus did not publicly appear as the Messiah till the age of 30. On the whole the possibility has to be placed in doubt, there being no direct evidence. It is not beyond the ingenuity of scribes to borrow a key from Ezekiel and with it unlock Daniel 9.25,26, i.e. Ezek. 4.6 "... a day for each year". But this is all conjecture.

APPENDIX IMatthew's Jewishness.

I have already (pp.23-30 above) favoured the view that there were two editors of the final redaction of Matthew, one a Jew, the other a Gentile. Much of the Jewishness which appears in his Gospel may be the contrived Jewishness of a Gentile editor. The aim of this Appendix is to give a fuller account of Matthew's Jewishness, but also to reveal that some of the Jewish material is presented in a way that almost precludes the claim that the editor of it was a Jew.

Jews were to be judged by rejecting, not a foreigner, but one "from among their brethren" (Deut.17.15). This text is not quoted by Matthew but as we saw on-p.253 he traces Jesus' genealogy back to Abraham (1.1,2), father of the faithful (rather than to Adam (Lk. 3.38, father of the human race). Matthew's version of the family tree is wrought with the crucial events of Israelite and Jewish history in mind (1.17). It is more royal than that of Luke, i.e. through Solomon and the kings of Judah vv. 6b ff. rather than through Nathan, another son of David (Lk. 3.31). Matthew sees the entire event of the nativity as the fulfilment of Scripture (1.22f.; 2.5f.), including the return from Egypt and the Massacre of the Innocents (1.15,18,19). All this is peculiar to him. Matthew reinforces this by liberal references to the fact that Jesus fulfilled O.T. prophecies (1.22f.; 2.5f.; 3.3; 4.14ff.; 8.17; 12.17ff.; 13.14f.,35; 15.17f.,23; 21.4f.,13,42; 26.54,56; 27.9f.,35,46).

Altogether a total of over 90 O.T. quotations, references and allusions (the last of varying degree of possibility) may be ascribed to Matthew as against about 30 in Mark, 60 in Luke and 40 in John. These are:

1.21	-	Ps. 130.8
1.23	-	Is. 7.14
2. 6	-	Mic. 5. 2
2.15	-	Hos. 11. 1
2.18	-	Jer.31.15
2.23	-	Is. 11.1; Jer.23.5; 33.15; Zech.3.8; 6.12
3.3	-	Is. 40.3

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|-----------|--|
| 4. 4      | - Deut. 8. 3.  |
| 4. 6      | - Ps. 91.11,12.  |
| 4. 7      | - Deut. 6.16.  |
| 4.10      | - Deut. 6.13; 10.20.   |
| 4.14ff.   | - Is. 9. 1,2.  |
| 5.5       | - Ps. 37.11.   |
| 5.21      | - Ex. 20.13; Deut. 5.17.   |
| 5.27      | - Ex. 20.14; Deut. 5.18.   |
| 5.31      | - Deut. 24. 1.   |
| 5.33      | - Ex. 20. 7; Lev. 19.12.   |
| 5.38      | - Ex. 21.24; Lev. 24.20; Deut. 19.21.                            |
| 5.43      | - Lev. 19.18.  |
| 7.23      | - Ps. 6. 8.  |
| 8. 4      | - Lev.14. 2.   |
| 8.17      | - Is. 53.4 (markedly LXX).                                       |
| 10.35, 36 | - Mic. 7. 6.   |
| 11. 5     | - Is. 29.18; 35.5; 61.1.   |
| 11.10     | - Mal. 3. 1.   |
| 11.14     | - Mal. 4. 5.   |
| 12. 3     | - 1 Sam. 21. 6.  |
| 12. 5     | - Num. 28. 9,10.   |
| 12.7      | - Hos. 6. 6.   |
| 12.17ff.  | - Is. 42. 1-4.   |
| 12.40     | - Jon. 1.17, etc.  |
| 12.42     | - 1 Kings 10. 1.   |
| 13.14f.   | - Is. 6. 9,10.   |
| 13.35     | - Ps. 78. 2.   |
| 15. 4     | - Ex. 20.12; 21.17; Lev.20.9; Deut.5.16;<br>Prov.20.20.          |
| 15. 8, 9  | - Is. 29.13.   |
| 17.10     | - Mal. 4. 5.   |
| 18.16     | - Lev. 19.15.  |
| 19. 4     | - Gen. 1.27.   |
| 19.5      | - Gen. 2.24.   |
| 19.18     | - Ex. 20.12, etc.  |
| 19.19     | - Lev. 19.18.  |
| 21. 4f.   | - Zech. 9. 9.  |
| 21. 9     | - Ps. 118.26.  |
| 21.13     | - Jer. 7.11.   |
| 21.33     | - Is. 5. 1.  |
| 21.42     | - Ps. 118.22.  |
| 22.24     | - Deut. 25. 5.   |
| 22.32     | - Ex. 3. 6.  |
| 22.37     | - Deut. 6. 5.  |
| 22.39     | - Lev. 19.18.  |
| 23.35     | - Gen. 4.8; 2 Chron.24.21,22.                                    |
| 23.38     | - Ps. 69.25; Jer.12.7; 22. 5.                                    |
| 23.39     | - Ps. 118.26.  |
| 24.15     | - Dan. 8.13; 9.27; 11.31; 12.11.                                 |
| 24.29     | - Is. 13. 9,10; Ezek.32. 7; Joel 3.15.                           |
| 24.37     | - Gen. 7. 4.   |
| 25.41     | - Ps. 6.8.   |
| 26.54, 56 | - Ps.22, passim; Is.52.14-53 passim; Lam.1.12;<br>Zech.13.6 etc. |
| 26.67     | - Is. 50.6.  |
| 27. 9f.   | - Zech. 11.13.   |
| 27.35     | - Ps.22.18.  |
| 27.38     | - Is. 53.9a.   |



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|-------------------------|--------------------|
| 27.43                   | - Ps. 22. 7, 8, 9. |
| 27.46                   | - Ps. 22. 1.       |
| 27.60 (57) <sup>1</sup> | - Is. 53. 9b.      |

(N.E.B. translators would dispute the translation "with a rich man" in Is. 53. 9 and therefore Mt. 27.60 is rather tentative). 27.35 is a doubtful allusion<sup>2</sup> as the words of Ps. 22.18 are absent from the early witnesses of the Alexandrian and Western types of text (see Metzger, op.cit., p.69). Matthew quotes Ps. 22. 1 (27.46) so it is probable that he had other parts of the Psalm in mind.<sup>3</sup> The same could well apply to 27.43 and Ps. 22.7, 8, 9, where Matthew could be hinting that Jesus' enemies unwittingly fulfilled a messianic prophecy.

Plainly, the explicit quotations and references are those upon which we may base the strongest case for Matthew's Jewishness. Amongst these, the ones that are peculiar to Matthew are of the most importance. They are: 1.22f.; 2.5f., 15f., 17f., 23; 4.14ff.; 5.21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43; 8.17; 9.13; 12.5, 7, 17ff.; 21.4f. (par. in John only, Jn. 12.14f.); 21.16; 26.54, 56; 27.9f. These are far in excess of Mark or Luke. Of these 12.7, 17ff.; 21.4f., 16 are specially valuable as stressing the gentleness and compassion of the Messiah who ought to have been welcomed by Jews.

In three of the four times the formula "it is written" appears in the temptation narrative (4.4, 6, 7, 10) it also appears in Luke (Lk. 4.4, 8, 9). On the occasion of the reply to the third temptation in Luke (the second in Matthew) Luke has "it is said" (Lk. 4.12). The significance of this seems merely to be that "it is said" is an alternative formula and this is corroborated by the use of "it was said" in Mt. 5.21, 27 etc. The last one of the antitheses, Mt. 5.43, since it includes "hate your enemy", not in O.T.

- 1 It is noteworthy that only Matthew explicitly calls Joseph rich (v. 57, cf. Mk. 15.43; Lk. 23.50; Jn. 19.38). This may be due to his effort to see a fulfilment of Is. 53.9b in 27.57-60. This reads obscurely in the LXX (the form he mainly uses, see Hill, op.cit., p.36) though there the word is plural: "... καὶ (ὧν) τοὺς πλουσίων ἀντὶ τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ..."
- 2 cf. Jn. 19.24, where Ps. 22.18 is quoted.
- 3 See also the quotation from Dodd's According to the Scriptures, p.353 below.

Scripture, might indicate that "said" is less authoritative than "written". However, Metzger<sup>1</sup> observes that various forms of "said" are found in the N.T. and the Mishnah to introduce quotations from the O.T.

Besides "it was said", formulae including the words "fulfil" and "prophet" and "have you not/never read?" are more common in Matthew than in the other Synoptics.

In 24.15 the words "spoken by the prophet Daniel" are absent from the parallels Mk.13.14; Lk.21.20.

26.54,56 opens the door to a multitude of possible references and allusions. As the crowd had come "from the chief priests and elders"<sup>2</sup> (26.47) it is conceivable that Matthew alluded to Ps.22.16a, "dogs" being reprobate Jews and "a company of evildoers", the members of the Sanhedrin, for Lk.22.47 simply calls it a crowd not mentioning who sent it. Moreover, they had "swords and clubs" (26.47,55) which implies that they could wound Jesus and in fact he was "struck" (26.67; 27.30). So Matthew may have had in mind the reference to wounding etc., in Is. 53.5; Zech.13.6. Looking forward to the crucifixion Matthew may also here be thinking of Ps.22.16b, 17, though by conjectural emendations the N.E.B. makes it unlikely that these verses have anything to do with crucifixion and 22.16b is a text whose meaning is uncertain. However, Ps.22.14,15 refer to torture and death which could be consistent with crucifixion.

The reference to Judas as "friend" (27.50) unique to Matthew (cf. Mk. 14.45; Lk.22.48) may indicate that Matthew was alluding to Ps.41.9 (cf. Jn.13.18).

1 Bruce M. Metzger, "The Formulas Introducing Quotations of Scripture in the N.T. and the Mishnah", JBL, 70, 1951, pp.297-307. On p.298 he writes: "By far the majority of quotations in the Mishnah are introduced by the verb **אמר**".

2 Mark adds "scribes" (Mk.14.43) and John has "chief priests and Pharisees" (Jn.18.3) so at this point Matthew is less obviously against the scribes and Pharisees. This is a little bit of evidence hinting that here is an editor different from the one who edited the "woes" of chapter 23.

Apparently impressive as the total quotations, references and possible allusions may be, they do not conclusively show that Matthew is wholly or outstandingly Jewish contrivedly or otherwise.

Much shorter though his Gospel is, Mark twice quotes more of the O.T. than Matthew: once when he gives the opening of the Shema (Deut.6.4; Mk.11.17 par. Mt.22.37; Lk.10.27); once when he alone has the fuller citation of Is.56.7 including the words "for all the nations" (Mk.11.17, par. Mt.21.13; Lk.19.46). There is a significant point at which Mark makes a seemingly abortive attempt to be Jewish (9.13) where he claims that Elijah (John the Baptist) has suffered and died as written of him. Nowhere is it so prophesied. Cranfield asks: "Is 1 Kgs.XIX. 2,10 in mind?"<sup>1</sup> but there we find only threats on the life of Elijah. Matthew has evidently edited this (and here the editor was probably a Jew) to read: "the scribes say that first Elijah must come".

Mk.9.12 is peculiar to him in asking, in this context: "how is it written of the Son of man, that he should suffer...?", but Matthew has two sayings with the "fulfilled" formula on the same subject in a later context (26.54,56).

Luke has a vast number of possible allusions to the O.T. Much of his infancy narrative has abundant evidence of O.T. allusions. For example 1.33b: "of his kingdom there will be no end" almost certainly alludes to Dan.2.44; 7.14,18,27. The Magnificat (Lk.1.46-55) and Zechariah's prophetic hymn (Lk.1.68-79) are evidently full of O.T. thought.

Peculiar to Luke is the reference to Exodus noted in 2.23; the fulfilments of O.T. in 4.17ff.; 21.22; 22.37 and the use of Ps.31.3 by the expiring Jesus (23.46). We may conjecture that Ps.31.3 was taught to Jewish children by their mothers as a bedtime prayer and that a Jewish-Christian writer with an eyewitness account in front of him could not have missed it. Lk.20.18

<sup>1</sup> Op.cit., ad loc.

is peculiar to him with probable allusions to Is.8.14; Dan.2.34,35,44; Zech.12.3.

In the parallels Mt.20.17-19; Mk.10.30-34; Lk.18.31-34 Luke alone has the formula: "it is written".

Lk.24.25f.,44 indicate all of the messianic prophecies to be encompassed and if they were designated this would place Luke comfortably ahead of Matthew in O.T. references.

John also has several O.T. quotations, peculiar to him, e.g. Jn.19.36, which give him too the right to be called Jewish at these points.

Jesus is like Moses in his authority (see the antitheses in chap.5 7.28; 23.2)<sup>1</sup>; in his meekness (11.29; 21.5, cf. Num.12.3). In the copious quotations of and allusions to the O.T. Matthew is akin to the Aboth.

Matthew's Jesus is clad in purple and the title "son of David" occurs in contexts in which Jesus displays the mercy for which his forefather was famed (1 Sam. 22.23; 24.6; 25.32f.; 26.7ff.; 2 Sam. 9.6ff.). This title is applied by Matthew alone in 12.23; 15.22; 21.9,15. 9.27 may also be included as it is a doublet of 20.30 and both cannot have parallels in Mark and Luke for they only record one instance each of a similar episode. In their parallels (Mk.10.47f.; Lk.18.39f.) it is significant that they have "Jesus" in apposition to "son of David" whereas Matthew has "Lord" thus heightening the majesty of this person.

Jesus' person and teaching are mild, gentle, non-coercive (11.28-30; 12.19,20). This factor has to be taken into account in assessing the criteria of judgement. The matter of the yoke provides an illustration. Those who spurn Jesus are hostile not to someone bringing a more grievous yoke than that of the O.T. law, despite the much greater demands of his moral imperatives (chap.5 etc.), but an easy yoke, because he is evidently

1 i.e. Matthew here makes Jesus set his seal on Moses' authority, implying that Jesus' authority was equal to or greater than that of Moses.

willing and able to share the burden of it.

There are some important points at which Matthew appears to be non-Jewish. One of these is the absence of an explicit doctrine of the Remnant (for Matthew a doctrine of a remnant of Jews who became disciples of Jesus). 23.39 is seen by Hill (op.cit., p.43) as evidence of this, but is Matthew not given to denouncing vain protestations (7.21f.; 15.8f.; 25.11,44)? Even those who cry "blessed ..." of Jesus (21.9) were not disciples but a crowd (v.8) which melted away or changed its mind.

The statement about the purchase of the potter's field and the price of betrayal is mistakenly attributed to Jeremiah (27.9) instead of Zech. 11.12,13 and made into a prophecy. This is peculiar to Matthew. It does not represent a complete lapse of memory for Jer.32.6-15; 18.2-3 have some points of contact but Jeremiah's price is seventeen shekels. If the editor of this had been a Jew instructed from youth in the O.T. it is unlikely that he would have made such an error. Certainly if he had been writing in a Palestinian milieu, some of his readers would have corrected him. Even if his School had contained a number of Jews and been far outwith Palestine, the same would have applied.

McCasland<sup>1</sup> has analysed several examples of the way in which Matthew, he argues, "twists the Scriptures". In quoting this phrase from 2 Pet. 3.16 he omits to comment on whether the upshot in Matthew's case is the same as that of those condemned in 2 Peter namely "to their own destruction". This, so far as we know, was not the fate of Matthew, nor of his readers.

To this charge I feel Matthew might have answered: "I did it from the highest motive, namely to show that God took the initiative in sending His Son. In my polemic against the Jews I wanted to show overwhelmingly that God had made this plain by causing His prophets to foretell the coming of

1 S.Vernon McCasland, "Matthew Twists the Scriptures", JBL, Vol.80, 1961, pp.143-148.

Christ. This was in order that, when he came, he should be recognised by those who had studied the O.T. Scriptures and adopted the right attitude to them. Thus, my motive was really ethical: to strengthen the disciples with the idea that "your Father knows what you need (in this case a Saviour, cf. 1.21 besides a Teacher (5.21 etc.), King and Lord (25.34,37 etc.)) before you ask him" (6.8) and to render more obviously guilty those Jews who reject him. True I took liberties<sup>1</sup> with the family tree, but it is rather neat the way I put it - three fourteens with high points at Abraham, David and Jesus and a low at the deportation (1.17). Admittedly, "He shall be called a Nazarene" (2.23) could be described as a far fetched exegesis on nezer, but no more so than rabbinic exegesis would have done had any rabbi been minded to apply any possible Scripture to Jesus". We may add that St.Paul's use of the O.T. in Gal.4.21-31 is hardly less extravagant.

Whether or not one feels Matthew is justified one cannot doubt his high view of the inspiration of the O.T.<sup>2</sup> In one parallel case it is higher than that of the other Synoptics 22.31b: "... said to you by God" (i.e. directly not through an intermediary), cf. Mk.12.26 "God said to him (Moses)"; Lk.20.37 "Moses showed".

Many scholars besides McCasland<sup>3</sup> have remarked upon Mt.21.7 where it seems possible that Matthew is making the curious assertion that Jesus rode two donkeys, mother and colt. Certainly the text says Jesus sat on them (αὐτῶν). If this means the asses then McCasland is correct in the jibe that Matthew has changed "Mark's simple, dignified narrative of this

1 He is fourteen generations short of Lk.3.23-38 and counts David and Jechoniah twice each (cf. 1 Chron. 2-3.19).

2 cf. Bruce M. Metzger, op.cit., ("Formulas ...") p.306: "The contributors to the N.T. ... had the very highest view of the inspiration of the Scriptures which they quote". "The identification of the divine Author with the words of Scripture" was, he adds, "habitual".

3 Loc. cit., p.145f.

event (Mk. 11.1-11) into something like a circus spectacle."<sup>1</sup> But could Jesus not have ridden on both asses each at different stages of the journey? McCasland might have at least conceded that the ~~אֲוִיִּם~~ could have referred to the garments which are the last-named plural noun before the pronoun. However, we should admit that if the editor of this passage were a Jew, he would have been more careful to show that he understood the parallelism of Hebrew poetry and not recorded two asses (vv. 2,3,7) as having been present at all.<sup>2</sup> If he had not misunderstood Zechariah 9.9 it is hard to see why he did not follow Mark and record only one, a colt, which having never been ridden, had sacred associations, cf. Num.19.2; 1 Sam. 6.7. These would have suited admirably the concepts of the Virgin Birth (1.18) and the new tomb (27.60) and it is surprising that Matthew introduces the dam. In any case, he fails to mention the point made by Mark that the colt was unbroken (Mk. 11.2). So it is doubly clear that he did not realise the conditions of consecration of an animal to God. Altogether it is unlikely that the editor of this passage was a Jew - paradoxically, in the face of his quoting Zechariah.

Justification of the more extensive treatment of the Pirke Aboth and the Mekilta than of other rabbinic material lies in the fact that we are much less sure of the date of a much greater proportion of the other rabbinic sayings. But some of these have been included in footnotes, so it may be desirable to say why.

Strack draws attention to the mention made in Ezra 8.4ff. "of Levites as the teachers of the people, mebinim 'eth ha-'am, who were in need of a presentation of the sense".<sup>3</sup> He points out that the Talmud itself says

1 Loc. cit., p.143.

2 Cf. Mk.11.1-7; Lk.19.30-35; Jn.12.14,15, who mentioned only the colt.

3 Hermann L.Strack, Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash, New York, 1969, p.9.

that "Takkanoth were instituted by Moses, Joshua, David, Solomon".<sup>1</sup>

It is therefore plain that some of the oral teaching later compiled in the Talmud and Mishnah is very ancient. Strack<sup>2</sup> also produces substantial evidence to show that the "Interdict on Writing down" was not authoritative and that much of the oral law was in fact written down especially in the fourth century B.C.

In sum, while holding to the view that Matthew is often Jewish the claim that the Gospel is exclusively of Jewish origin is untenable.

1 Ibid.

2 Loc. cit., pp.12ff.



APPENDIX JThe Dead Sea Scrolls and Matthew.

Bowman and Tapp write of Mt. 5.22ff:

"The Dead Sea Scrolls contain several passages that are more suggestive of what Jesus has in mind at this point than anything in the writings of the rabbis, both with regard to the nature of sin and the penalties attaching thereto. For example, much is made in these scrolls of the fact that the whole community, gathered together as an assembly, is to judge all matters pertaining to the discipline of its members."<sup>1</sup>

They see a "striking similarity" between Mt. 5.23 and the following from the Manual of Discipline:

"One shall not speak to his brother in anger or resentment or with a stiff neck or a hard heart or a wicked spirit, one shall not hate him in the folly of his heart. In his days he shall reprove him and shall not bring upon him iniquity, and also a man shall not bring against his neighbour a word before the masters without having rebuked him before witnesses."<sup>2</sup>

Bowman and Tapp go on to observe that both Matthew and the Qumran community are "deeply concerned with the matter of attitude". This is what we find in Matthew in general and it has been seen to be a principal element in all the criteria of judgement that he puts forward.

Bowman and Tapp's observation: "the whole community gathered together as an assembly ... to judge ..." may be found to have a parallel in Mt. 18.17a. Mt. 18.16 is very similar to part of CR VI: "no one is to accuse his companion before the congregation without having first admonished him in the presence of witnesses".<sup>3</sup>

The quoted command "hate your enemy" (5.43) could be an attack on the Essenes. There are places where the O.T. states that a man of God

1 J.W.Bowman and R.W.Tapp, The Gospel from the Mount, Philadelphia, 1957, p.69f.

2 Damascus Document XVII in Miller Burrows, The Dead Sea Scrolls, London, 1956, p.362f.

3 Geza Vermes, The Dead Sea Scrolls in English, London, 1977, p.80. Except where noted, the quotations from the Scrolls are out of Vermes' translation.

hated the enemies of God, e.g. Ps. 139.21,22. But in Matthew it is your enemy, not explicitly God's. Secondly, there are no actual commands to hate enemies in the O.T., though there are plenty of commands to smite the enemies of God and of Israel (e.g. Num. 25.17; Deut. 7.2; 13.15 etc.). But in Num. 35.21 it is clear that smiting a man in enmity so that he dies is taken most seriously as it is subject to the death penalty. To rejoice at the destruction of a personal enemy was frowned upon (Job 31.29). In CR I, however, there are two clear commands that the community should hate: "hate all that God has rejected ... hate all the sons of darkness". And in CR IX, "The Master shall judge every man according to his spirit" (cf. Mt. 7.1,6 and Num. 35.24). "He shall love and hate likewise".<sup>1</sup> Later in the same section we read: "Everlasting hatred in the spirit of secrecy for the men of perdition". There is no command to hate a personal enemy but this may not have been what Matthew meant anyway; in 5.11 it is the enemies of the faith who are intended and, assuming the reader to be a disciple, the distinction between such and personal enemies may be purely hypothetical.

Altogether, while we may not say dogmatically that Matthew had the sectarians in mind, it is a remarkable coincidence that the DSS contain so many commands to hate. Davies says that Jesus, if not the primitive church, seems to have rejected the Qumran "eschatology of vengeance".<sup>2</sup>

Matthew records one command and one exhortation to be perfect (5.48; 19.21). In the first, it is likely that he has altered Luke's (Q) "merciful" (Lk. 6.36) in order to accommodate to demands such as we find in the DSS to "walk perfectly" e.g. CR III, XIII etc. It would seem that merciful is more original as, in the O.T., God is often said to be merciful or have mercy, e.g. Gen. 19.19; Ex. 20.6; Num. 14.8; Ps. 5.7; 13.5; 18.58;

1 Vermes, op.cit., ad loc.

2 SSM, p.248.

21.7, etc., whereas He is not described as perfect (though His works are: His ways Ps. 18.30; His law Ps. 19.7). This means that Matthew must have had a strong motive for changing it and selecting the word perfect. Its use by the Qumran sect is the most likely motive.

Matthew also perhaps felt challenged by the Qumran call to be perfect and did not see why the demands of Christianity ought to be pitched any lower. The Sect's idea of perfection is connected rather with renunciation than with active benevolence as in Mt. 5.48 and 19.24, though in the latter renunciation is part of the demand. In Hymn 10 we find, according to Vermes,<sup>1</sup> a description of "the Son of Man" who might be considered to be the perfect man. This man has reached an honourable state by the hatred of wealth and sacrifice of pleasure: "(For the soul) of Thy servant has loathed (riches) and gain, and he has not (desired) exquisite delights." Mt. 19.16-30 embraces such asceticism, but it goes much further to include positive commands: "give to the poor ... follow me".

It is hoped that this brief and obviously incomplete comparison between Matthew and the Dead Sea Scrolls will be sufficient to show some likeness, as well as a possibility of polemic by Matthew against the Qumran sect.

Davies writes:

"In the background of Matthew is a church ready to absorb sectarian and this particularist influence but only on its own universalist terms ... Whatever the sectarian influence may have been it would be unwise to look in their direction for the key to Matthew ..."<sup>2</sup>

What he says of the Sermon on the Mount is true of the rest of Matthew:

"Much of the content of the SM originally emerged in the encounter of sectarians and Jesus: its present form and purpose are dictated by the Pharisaic-Christian encounter after A.D. 70 ..."<sup>3</sup>

1 Vermes, op. cit., ad loc.

2 SSM, p.255.

3 Loc. cit., p.256.

The main reason why we will not consider the Dead Sea Scrolls more fully is that it is plain that they are by no means the main background against which Matthew wrote. This is specially true of the theme of judgement. As far as polemic goes Blair writes: "The real danger of the author's day was Pharisaic Scribalism and to this he devoted the brunt of his attack."<sup>1</sup>

1 Edward P. Blair, Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew, New York, 1960, p.148.

APPENDIX KPossible Gnostic Influence.

Does Matthew show any gnostic influence or does he engage in an anti-gnostic polemic? Some might answer: "Obviously not, for Gnosis is a second century phenomenon whereas Matthew's date is 100 A.D., at the latest." However, the roots of Gnosis, taken in the widest possible sense, as defined by Davies, below, probably went back at least a century before that.

E.F.Scott put it:

"The struggle between the church and Gnosticism is commonly associated with the second century in which its cleavage between the orthodox and the heretical teaching widened out to its full limits. But there can be little doubt that the wave which culminated in the great Gnostic system had long been gathering."<sup>1</sup>

R.Mc.L. Wilson would agree with the figure of the long gathering wave and hints at this when he writes:

"By Gnosticism we mean the specifically Christian heresy of the 2nd Century A.D., by Gnosis in a broader sense, the whole complex of ideas belonging to the Gnostic movement."<sup>2</sup>

As far as the dating of written Gnostic material goes evidence that Matthew was influenced by Gnosis is nil. C.H.Dodd states:

"There is no Gnostic document known to us which can with any show of probability be dated - at any rate in the form in which alone we have access to it - before the period of the New Testament.

The typical Gnostic systems all combine in various ways and proportions ideas derived from Christianity."

(Dodd goes on to indicate syncretism in the said systems).<sup>3</sup>

We may fairly apply this to the Synoptic Gospels and Matthew in particular. (To consider John would involve a digression). It is one thing to show that this Christian material gave rise to gnostic speculation;

1 The Apologetic of the New Testament, London, 1907, p.147.

2 Gnosis and the New Testament, Oxford, 1968, p.9.

3 Interpretation, p.98 quoted by Wilson, loc.cit., p.8.

quite another to agree that Matthew was subject to gnostic influence.

Davies would agree that Scott's view is not altogether out-dated when he defines it in the loose sense in which it may be taken:

"A widespread movement of the human spirit born out of that fusion between East and West, which began with Alexander the Great and came to concentrate on some form of gnosis (knowledge) as the means of redemption."<sup>1</sup>

Davies goes on to say amongst other things for example, that this form was "often conducive to licence" so he analyses all the uses of "lawlessness" (*ἀνομία*) in Matthew to see whether they are an answer to Gnosticism. Of the discrepancies between the essential nature of professing believers and their works in 7.23 he writes:

"This problem became extremely acute with the emergence of Gnosticism but it marked the more orthodox life of the church also. Secondly, the reference to false prophets is eschatological."

In 13.41, *ἀνομία* is again eschatological. In 24.12 and 23.28, he suggests that it applies to some "failure of the will", not to outward acts. Davies fails to investigate the possibility of a connexion between Matthew and the ascetic element in gnostic texts. However, the most that can safely be claimed in this regard is that Matthew's asceticism and the stream of gnostic thought which carried ascetic teaching flowed from a common spring.

As the things that have been revealed in 11.25 refer not to esoteric Gnosis but to the works of 11.2ff., it is unlikely that 11.27 was put in as a corrective to the gnostic doctrine of emanations. It is likely to be an antidote to polytheism and syncretism. That these were rife in Phoenicia may be verified in Rawlinson's History of Phoenicia.<sup>2</sup>

When we take into account the "gnostic" trends and tendencies which have been identified in the New Testament, it is certainly at least possible that Matthew was influenced by Gnosis. But clear evidence is lacking.

1 SSM, p.202-205.

2 Op.cit., p.340 and n.1.

APPENDIX LDeath and Resurrection.

Cullmann talks of the Resurrection and by such talk of death he magnifies the glory of the Resurrection.

He wants to set off the latter against the horror and desolation of the Cross: "Quiconque peindrait une belle mort, ne saurait peindre la résurrection"<sup>1</sup> is one of the epigrams which sums up his aim.

With this Matthew would agree for he, unafraid of the mystery or of misunderstanding, unlike Luke and John, includes Mark's cry of dereliction (27.46, par Mk. 15.34) varying it only slightly by 'Eli' for 'Eloi'. Green<sup>2</sup> holds that it is likely that the words do express a "sense of abandonment". Green also holds that 'Eli' is "an undisputed Hebraism", the reason for it being that 'Eloi' (Mk. 15.34) could not be confused by the bystanders with the name of Elijah. D.E.Nineham recalls "the well known argument (cf. e.g. Schmiedel in *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, col. 1881) that the early church would never have ascribed a cry of despair to Jesus without the strongest historical warrant".<sup>3</sup>

C. E. B. Cranfield is of the same view writing:

"...the early church is not likely to have invented Jesus' quotation of such words - that it was a source of embarrassment to the early church is clear cf. its omission by Luke and John, and the variations in Mark in the textual tradition. We are on the firmest historical ground here ... The cry is to be understood in the light of Mk. 14.36; 2 Cor. 5.21; Gal. 3.13. The burden of the world's sin, his complete self-identification with sinners, [cf. Mt. 3.15 which is peculiar to Matthew] involved not only a felt but a real abandonment by his Father. But the cry also marks the lowest depth of the hiddenness of the Son of God - and so the triumphant *ΤΕΤΕΛΕΩΤΗ* of Jn. 19.30 is paradoxically its true interpretation."<sup>1</sup>

1 O.Cullmann, *op.cit.*, p.35.

2 H.Benedict Green, *op.cit.*, ad loc.

3 D.E.Nineham, Saint Mark, Harmondsworth, 1971, ad loc.

This line of argument seems completely cogent. The last sentence is consistent with Matthew's theology in general. I have considered this to be important enough to deal with at some length because it shows that Jesus bore the judgement of God. He alone was able to do so vicariously. While this does not bear directly on the criteria of judgement, it is a significant backcloth against which we may better understand who is being rejected when Jesus is rejected. Judgement is ordained therefore for those who reject the sin-bearer who himself absorbs the judgement of God. Matthew clearly did not take over the cry of dereliction from Mark unthinkingly for, as noted, above, he edited it.

We have to weigh the above interpretation against the findings of C.H.Dodd<sup>2</sup> where he writes that a single verse when quoted by a Christian evangelist or teacher was pointer to the whole context. Yet, in support of the view advanced by Green, Nineham and Cranfield, it may be argued that the despair was real, even if as momentary as the recitation of that first verse of the Psalm. It is possible that Matthew cast Jesus in the role of Scapegoat, cf. Lev. 16.8ff., as John cast him in the role of Lamb of God (Jn. 1.29,36). With his high Christology, no one could justifiably accuse Matthew of regarding Jesus as permanently forsaken. Jesus did not remain dead as did the ante-type. Thus even if the comforting end of Ps.22 were in the mind of Matthew when he put the first verse in Jesus' lips, this does not necessarily imply that his Jesus did not experience God-forsakenness. Certainly Matthew pictured Jesus as sin-bearer (27.52,53) and was specially fond of quoting from the Old Testament, having many more quotations, references and probably more allusions

1 C.E.B.Cranfield, The Gospel According to Saint Mark, Cambridge, 1963, ad loc.

2 C.H.Dodd, According to the Scriptures, London, 1953; p.126.



to it than the other Synoptics.<sup>1</sup> It is not too much to claim that he knew of Hab. 1.13a: "Thou who are of purer eyes than to behold evil and canst not look on wrong ...". This would mean that he was familiar with the idea that God averted his gaze from iniquity and consequently from the bearer of it.(cf. The Gospel of Peter 4ff.).

We might further urge against the denial that Jesus was really forsaken by God that the one who took the cry of despair to himself was in the extremity of a most horrible and terrible death. Moreover, in that he was an unique person (8.27; 9.6 etc.) the death he died was not only horrible but uniquely horrible. At any rate, against the background of inexpressible agony of body, mind and spirit, Matthew heightens the marvel of the Resurrection over against the other evangelists by being the only one who refers to the rising of the bodies of the saints even before that of Jesus, (27.52,53); by the inclusion of the experience of the guards (he is the only evangelist who records that any unbeliever gained direct knowledge of the Resurrection); and by the insertion of the Great Commission (28.18ff.).

Taken on its own, the above statement by Cullmann on death "... c'est la destruction de toute vie ..." <sup>2</sup> is too strong for Matthew, who evidently writes assuming the reality of the Resurrection without the dichotomy between death and rising that Cullmann apparently makes. Matthew talks of entering into life (7.13; 19.17) as if it were inevitable for a disciple. He compares Jesus and Jonah (12.42) with the understanding of death-resurrection as one event.

The same quotation from Cullmann does represent early Jewish views. Later, however, there were notable advances on the miserable notions of the future life, e.g., Isaiah: "God will swallow up death in victory" (25.3 cf. Hos. 13.14); "Thy dead shall live, their bodies shall rise" (26.19 cf. Hosea 6.2); Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones (37.1-14) which antedates Dan. 12.2,3: "... many of those who sleep ... shall awake, some to everlasting life ..." by several centuries. These show that some exalted spirits, at

1 see p.336, above.

2 see p.88, above.

least, had the assurance of a better life to come for the righteous and punishment for the wicked. There is a clear prophecy of the Resurrection of the Holy One (= Messiah) in Ps. 16.10; Ps. 17.15 indicates that the believer will rise and awake in God's likeness. Job 19.25-27 though the text is corrupt is almost certainly pointing to some kind of resurrection, though the emphasis is rather on vindication. Pss. 49.15; 73.24-26 assume a resurrection of the writer because God is going to receive him having redeemed him from the power of the grave (48.15) which is probably equivalent to "afterward" in Ps. 73.24.

There are possible hints at a belief in the future life in Deut. 33.27 and Prov. 31.25 and surprisingly in Eccles. 3.11. We find: "The thought expressed is not that of the hope of an immortality, but rather the sense of the Infinite which precedes it, and out of which it at last grows."<sup>1</sup> So to claim that in Eccles. 3.11 there is a hint or intimation of the life to come is not stretching the meaning too far. The word for eternity is *olam* which simply means 'hidden' or 'beyond the vanishing point'.<sup>2</sup>

It must be admitted that most of these references are challenged by some scholars.

G.F. Moore writes of Is. 26.17-19 (dated by J.E. McFadyen: "probably at the end of the fourth century B.C."<sup>3</sup>): "The author's interest is in the renaissance of the people multiplied by the revival of generations dead and gone, rather than in the return of life of individuals".<sup>4</sup> This is a curious

1 In Ecclesiastes: or, the Preacher, ed. E.H. Plumptre, Cambridge, 1907, p.132.

2 Cf. Plumptre, loc.cit.: "'Beginning' and 'end' are alike hidden from him (man) and he fails to grasp it." See Francis Brown, S.R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs, A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, Oxford, 1907 (corrected impression 1952), p.762(i): "indefinite, unending future".

3 J.E. McFadyen, The Interest of the Bible, London, 1922, p.106.

4 G.F. Moore, Judaism, 2.296.

sentence as the second and third phrases of it seem to make up a kind of extended oxymoron. It is difficult to understand how generations could be revived without the resurrection of individuals, but Moore probably is only placing the emphasis where he believes it belongs. "It may be surmised that the suggestion came from Ezek. 37.12-14 cf. Isa. 66.7-9" continues Moore. However, he concludes the paragraph by admitting: "But the concluding verse Is. 26.19 furnished a frequent proof text from the Prophets for the Pharisaic doctrine of resurrection". On p.382 (loc. cit.) he supplies a reference to Sanh. 90b. and, on p.380 n.1, several more.

A.B.Davidson discusses Hos. 6.2; 13.14 along with Is. 26 and Ezek. 37.1-14 and states: "the idea of a resurrection of individuals lies under the imagery".<sup>1</sup>

W.Emery Barnes plainly feels that Ezek. 37.1-14 does not refer to a resurrection when he explains: "He (Jehovah) will bring scattered Israel out of their 'graves', that is out of the dark places in which they are held captive, and will bring them home again."<sup>2</sup> A.B.Davidson (loc. cit., p.450) on the other hand, while aware of this interpretation declares that underlying the symbolism is the idea of individual resurrection: "... we may be in doubt as to whether the prophet refers to the actual raising of individuals dead or to the restoration of dismembered tribes, and a renewal of their national life. But even though it is to the latter, his imagery reposes on the familiar thought of individuals rising". On p.196 he has the attractive metaphor of the ocean (God's Spirit) filling every cave and hollow in the rocks (empty man).

McFadyen, (loc. cit., p.105f.), mentions the oscillations of feeling endured by Job and this perhaps typifies much of the O.T. In Job 14.12

1 A.B.Davidson, The Theology of the Old Testament, Edinburgh, 1904, p.528.

2 W.Emery Barnes, "Ezekiel", in A New Commentary on Holy Scripture, ed. by Charles Gore, London, 1928, p.539.

"man lies down and does not rise" but hope had been evidenced in 14.7-9:

"the thought (of life to come) is pushed sorrowfully away as soon as it emerges, but it remains hidden somewhere in Job's mind; and later it leaps forth in the sublime, if only momentary, assurance that beyond the grave he will see his Divine Vindicator face to face (19.25-27). This faith, once attained, is held with increasing confidence as the years go on".

Curiously, despite the corruption of the text and the manifold possible conjectures as to its meaning, there is in this instance quite a substantial agreement that something is said about the resurrection (see Samuel Rolles Driver and George Buchanan Gray where at any rate the words "I shall see God"<sup>1</sup> remain unchallenged and R.S.Franks<sup>2</sup> who states that probably the passage refers to an experience after death).

I conclude this Appendix with illustrations of what McFadyen calls "increasing confidence" in the life to come, the first of which also serves to confirm the Jewish belief in judgement, near the time of Matthew. It is from Sanh. 91b., quoted by W.O.E.Oesterley and G.H.Box to the effect that: "on the day of the Great Judgement angels as well as men will be judged, and the books opened, containing the records of men's deeds, for life or for death".<sup>3</sup> (cf. Ab. 4.29, by R.Eleazar ha-Kappar, second half of second century A.D. and beginning of the third).<sup>4</sup>

In the Pirke Aboth (4.22, Oesterley, op. cit., p.57) there is an appealing saying of R.Jacob (second half of the second century A.D.)<sup>5</sup> "... better is one hour of refreshment of spirit in the world to come than all the life of this world". Owing to the late date of these sayings they

1 Samuel Rolles Driver and George Buchanan Gray, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Book of Job, Edinburgh, 1921, ad loc.

2 R.S.Franks, "Job" in A Commentary on the Bible, ed. by Arthur S. Peake, London, 1919, ad loc.

3 W.O.E.Oesterley and G.H.Box, The Religion and Worship of the Synagogue, London, 1907, p.225.

4 Op. cit., (i.e. The Sayings of the Jewish Fathers) p.59,n.1.

5 Loc.cit., p.56,n.6.

cannot have influenced Matthew - possibly the reverse took place in the sense that rabbis may have wanted to affirm that Judaism could arouse hopes as glorious as Christianity. But they do serve as examples of the high points of Jewish belief not long after Matthew.

The Mekilta (2.1, Tr. Shir. 1.1ff.) derives the Resurrection of the dead from the words "then ... shalt" or "... shall" in Is. 60.5; 58.8; 35.6; Jer. 31.12 and Ex. 15.1: "Then Moses will sing". The last is a doubtful bit of exegesis but the others are valid.

For other examples on the same theme, see Abrahams, *op. cit.*, Series 2 pp.41-48.

The purpose of this Appendix is to accentuate both the horror of Jesus' death and the glory of his Resurrection. So it increases the guilt of those who reject Jesus and lends understanding to this criterion of judgement.

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